



THE LIBERTY BOYS OF '76

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THE LIBERTY BOYS — AND — "LIGHT HORSE HARRY" OR, CHASING THE BRITISH DRAGOONS By HARRY MOORE.



The girl came riding up alongside "Light-horse Harry" and Dick Slater, her eyes shining eagerly.
"The British dragoons have taken the road through the field!" she said. "You will have to ride fast, if you would head them off."

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THE LIBERTY BOYS AND 'LIGHT HORSE HARRY'

OR,

Chasing the British Dragoons.

By **HARRY MOORE.**

CHAPTER I.

CHASING THE BRITISH DRAGOONS.

"Say, Dick!"

"What, Bob"?"

"There's a party of British dragoons coming down the road!"

"How do you know?"

"I saw them. I was up in a tree taking a look around and caught sight of them."

"How far away are they?"

"About a mile."

"How large a party?"

"Oh, forty or fifty, I should say."

"Just about half our number."

"Yes; let's chase them, old fellow!"

"All right; I'm willing."

"Good! Tell the boys to get ready."

"I will."

It was a pleasant though somewhat hot afternoon in the month of August of the year 1779.

The place was in the heavy timbers bordering the Passaic River at a point four or five miles north of the present site of Newark, in New Jersey.

A party of one hundred young fellows of an average age of nineteen years was encamped not far from a road which wound through the timber like some huge serpent.

These youths were no other than the famous Liberty Boys of '76, who had done such good work for the great cause of Liberty.

The conversation given above had occurred between the

captain of this company, Dick Slater, and his righthand man and the second in command, Bob Estabrook.

Dick and Bob were lifelong friends, and had been chums and playmates from childhood. Their homes adjoined up in Westchester County, New York. Another thing that made the two such friends was the fact that Bob's sister Alice was Dick's sweetheart, while Dick's sister Edith was Bob's sweetheart.

But now to return to our story.

Dick Slater turned to where the youths were sitting engaged in conversation and called out:

"To horse, boys! A party of British dragoons is coming this way, and we will put it to rout, and then chase the redecoats back to New York!"

"That's what we'll do!" cried Mark Morrison.

"Yes, yes!" in a chorus of voices.

The youths leaped up and quickly bridled and saddled their horses—for theirs was a company of cavalry.

The instant this had been accomplished the youths led the horses to the road and leaped into the saddles.

"Forward!" cried Dick.

Down the road dashed the Liberty Boys.

They held their muskets in readiness for instant use.

They might meet the British dragoons at any moment.

The road wound and twisted this way and that, and it would be possible to get to within a very short distance of the enemy before being discovered.

"We certainly will meet them soon," said Dick; "be ready, boys!"

The youths nodded to signify that they would.

On they galloped.

Suddenly they rounded a bend in the road and were face to face with the dragoons.

But the advantage was with the Liberty Boys. They knew the redcoats were near at hand and were looking for them, and were ready for war, while the redcoats did not suspect the presence of an enemy until they appeared so suddenly, and were not prepared for war.

The British were within musket-shot distance, and Dick cried out sharply:

"Fire, Liberty Boys!"

Up went the muskets.

Crash!—roar!

The volley rang out loudly, and then on the air rose wild yells, shrieks and groans.

At least twenty of the British dragoons had been dropped out of their saddles.

The rest of the party whirled their horses and dashed away back down the road.

"After them!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed the command and urged their horses forward at a swift pace.

The redcoats whirled in their saddles and fired shots from their muskets; but their aim was bad, if they aimed at all, and none of the Liberty Boys were killed, and only one or two were wounded, the wounds being slight ones at that.

"Chase the scoundrels clear to the river and into it, Dick!" said Bob, eagerly.

"We will, Bob!"

It was an exciting chase, indeed.

On dashed pursued and pursuers.

The British were out of pistol-shot distance, and the Liberty Boys were busying themselves reloading their muskets as they went along.

This was a difficult feat, but it was one that the youths had practiced till they were able to accomplish it; there were few cavalymen who could do such a thing.

When at last they succeeded in getting their muskets reloaded the Liberty Boys took aim as best they could and fired another volley.

They dropped four or five of the redcoats and caused the rest to give vent to yells of anger.

They turned in their saddles and fired pistol-shots at the Liberty Boys, but the bullets did not carry up, the distance being too great.

"That is a waste of good ammunition," grinned Bob.

"So it is," agreed Dick.

"Are we gaining, Dick?"

"It doesn't look like it; they have good horses, Bob."

"So they have, and it is lucky for them that such is the case."

"You are right about that."

"I wish we could capture them, old man."

"So do I; but if we can't capture them we will do the next best thing."

"Kill them, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't know but that is the best thing, anyway."

"It is satisfactory, at any rate."

The Liberty Boys had been in the patriot army three years now, and had taken part in a score of battles, as well as many times that number of skirmishes such as the present one. They were, indeed, veterans, although they were only youths as yet.

They proceeded to reload their muskets.

"We can keep picking them off a few at a time," said Bob, "and in that way we will get all of them in the end."

"True, Bob."

But the British dragoons were desperate.

They had learned that their pursuers were so expert as to be able to reload their muskets while riding along at a breakneck pace, and they realized that if they were to save themselves they must get greater speed out of their horses.

With this end in view they threw away their muskets to make the animals' loads lighter, and then belabored the poor beasts with whip and spur, urging them to renewed exertions.

"What do you think of that, Dick?" asked Bob. "They've thrown their muskets away!"

"It shows they realize that their only chance lies in making their horses outrun ours," said Dick.

"I guess you are right."

"Yes; you see, it lightens the horses' loads a bit and it leaves the riders unincumbered and free to put in all their time and expend all their energies in getting speed out of the horses."

"That's so; but I guess we won't throw our muskets away for the same reason, eh, old man?"

"No; if we can't catch them without having to do that, we will not catch them at all. I wouldn't risk losing our muskets."

Still the chase went on.

The redcoats were increasing the distance between them and their pursuers slowly but steadily.

"Try another volley," said Dick, the youths having succeeded in reloading their muskets.

The youths obeyed.

They fired a volley, but the dragoons were beyond the danger-line, for the bullets did not carry up.

The youths then turned their attention to getting greater speed out of their horses.

In this they were not very successful; their animals were going at about their best speed already.

The British dragoons turned into a road leading toward Paulus Hook.

At that time there was a strong fort at Paulus Hook, which is the present site of Jersey City.

The dragoons knew that if they could reach this fort they would be safe.

The Liberty Boys knew it, too, and were determined to keep them from getting to the fort, if such a thing was possible.

They urged their horses onward at their best speed.

It was a thrilling chase, indeed.

Past occasional houses they dashed, and the people came

running to the doors and out into the yards and stared in open-mouthed amazement.

It was not often that they got a chance to witness anything of this kind.

On dashed pursued and pursuers; mile after mile was traversed.

The dragoons were unable to increase the distance between themselves and their pursuers, but they were out of musket-shot distance, and this was about all they cared for. If they could keep out of range they would be able to reach the fort in safety.

On they dashed, and after them came the Liberty Boys.

So eager were the youths that they did not look to the right or to the left, but kept their eyes fixed on the dragoons in front.

The result was that they did not see some British soldiers who were emerging from the timber, a quarter of a mile to the right—at this point the road ran through a clearing of considerable extent.

There were quite a large number of the soldiers in question—two companies, at least. Doubtless they had been sent away to make an attack on some small garrison and were on their way back to New York.

"There goes a band of rebels chasing some of our soldiers!" cried the commander of the party of infantry. "We must hasten after them and try to cut them off and capture them. I think we can do it, as it is only two miles to the Hook."

The soldiers hastened down the road after the Liberty Boys on the double-quick.

The dragoons had not seen the British infantry, and so kept right on going at the best speed of their horses, and were successful in reaching the fort at Paulus Hook in safety.

The Liberty Boys, seeing it was useless to go any farther, stopped while yet half a mile away from the fort, and turning their horses' heads aside, started back in the direction from which they had just come.

They had gone but a short distance, when they were met by a boy of perhaps twelve years of age. He had been running at the top of his speed and was panting at a great rate.

"Stop!" he cried, as soon as he met the Liberty Boys; "don't go back up the road; there are a lot of redcoats hiding back there, and they'll shoot ye down when ye come along!"

CHAPTER II.

GOOD WORK.

The Liberty Boys stopped at once.

They stared at the boy in surprise.

"What's that you say, my boy?" exclaimed Dick; "there are redcoats in hiding back up the road?"

"Yes, sir."

"How many are there of them, do you think?"

"There must be two hundred of 'em, sir."

"So many as that!"

"Yes, sir."

"That is rather strange; we came along the road a few minutes ago and saw nothing of them."

"They came out of the timber just after ye went along; they saw ye, but ye didn't see them."

"Well, well! How far is it to where these redcoats are hidden?"

"About three-quarters of a mile."

"How does it happen that you have come to warn us? You must be a patriot?"

"I am."

"Where do you live?"

"Just this side of where the redcoats are in hiding, sir."

"Ah! What is your name?"

"Tom Benton, sir."

"I suppose your parents sent you to warn us?"

"No, sir; they are not at home. Sister Kate told me to come and warn you."

"Ah, your sister told you to do this, eh?"

"Yes."

"Well, she must be a brave and noble-hearted girl."

"She's a patriot, sir, like the rest of us."

"And I'm glad that such is the case, as it has been the means of saving us from riding into a trap. I am much obliged to you, Tom, and to your sister as well. If we don't see her, please tell her that the Liberty Boys appreciate what she has done for them and will try to even up the score by doing her a favor if the occasion ever arises."

"All right, sir; but you are not going to go on up the road, are you?"

"No; and it will hardly be safe for us to go back toward the fort at Paulus Hook."

"There's another road a mile to the west from here, sir," said the boy; "there is a path through the timber, but the entrance to the path is within a quarter of a mile of our house, and the redcoats might see you."

"Can they see the point where the path leads off from the road from where they are in hiding?"

"No, the road bends and shuts off their view; but some of them might be scouting around and see you."

"We'll have to risk that; lead the way, my boy, and we will make the attempt at escaping in the way you have pointed out."

Tom Benton turned and walked back up the road as fast as he could, the Liberty Boys following.

When they had gone about half a mile the boy turned aside and led the way into the timber, there being a path-way through among the trees.

Suddenly all were startled by hearing a scream, unmistakably in the voice of a girl.

It came from the direction in which Tom had said his home was.

Tom halted instantly and turned a pale face toward the Liberty Boys, who had halted also.

"That's sister's voice!" said Tom, and then he darted away through the timber in the direction from which the scream had sounded.

"Quick, boys; dismount and tie your horses!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed promptly.

They thought they scented a fight, and they were always eager for one.

"I guess we are to have a chance to repay the girl for what she did for us," said Bob.

"I think it likely," agreed Dick.

Then, the youths having finished tying their horses, he said:

"Follow me, all, and have your weapons ready for instant use."

They had reloaded their weapons while riding along, and were ready for business.

They stole through the timber, going rapidly, yet without much noise.

They were expert at this kind of work, and it gave them a big advantage over the British whenever there was any chance for practicing woodcraft.

They could see nothing of their boy guide.

Tom had run so swiftly that he was out of sight; the youths felt sure they would have no difficulty in finding the boy's home, however, as they had noted the direction in which he had gone, and, too, they remembered the direction from which the scream had sounded.

They hastened along, and were soon at the road.

Just across the road was a house. That it was the Benton home the youths were certain, for they saw a girl and a boy standing out in front of the building facing a large party of British soldiers. The boy Tom and the Liberty Boys doubted not that the girl was his sister Kate.

The boy was facing the soldiers boldly and was talking to them defiantly, the Liberty Boys judged, for the redcoats were laughing loudly, as though they enjoyed the affair.

The Liberty Boys paused to take a look at the situation before advancing; they wondered what the trouble had been that had caused the girl to utter the scream.

Then they caught sight of a redcoat standing at the end of the house. Piled against the building was a lot of brush, and the redcoat in question held a lighted torch in his hand, and was evidently only waiting the order to apply it and set the brush on fire.

So this was what had made the girl utter the scream; the redcoats had threatened to set her father's house on fire.

The Liberty Boys regretted that the redcoats were out of range from where they stood.

In order to get in range the youths would have to dash across the road, and they would be seen, of course, before they got to the yard-fence.

Dick was determined to make an attack, however, even though the redcoats outnumbered his youths two to one.

He depended on the fact that they would be taking the

redcoats by surprise to help in bringing about their discomfiture.

He sent the word along the line for the Liberty Boys to be ready to make the dash at the signal, a wave of the hand.

The youths cocked their muskets and got ready.

Every eye was on Dick.

Suddenly he gave the signal.

Forward leaped the Liberty Boys.

Out of the timber across the road they dashed.

They were almost to the yard-fence before the redcoats caught sight of them.

Instantly a wild yell went up from the redcoats, and to the surprise of the Liberty Boys, every British soldier dropped flat upon the ground at an order from the officer in command of the force.

Tom Benton seized his sister by the arm and pulled her away from the vicinity of the British soldiers, for he knew bullets would quickly be flying, and did not want that his sister should run any risks of being hit.

The Liberty Boys, although surprised by the action of the redcoats, were not disconcerted greatly, and they quickly took aim and fired a volley.

Of course, they could not do such execution as would have been possible had the redcoats remained standing, but many of the bullets found lodgment in the bodies of the redcoats.

Then the Liberty Boys dropped flat upon their faces behind the fence. They had played the same trick their enemies had played, and with greater success, for the British soldiers could not fire from a lying-down position and injure the Liberty Boys, who were also extended at full length on the ground.

The redcoats were determined to get even, if possible, however, and they rose to their knees and fired a volley at the youths.

Three of the Liberty Boys were wounded, one quite seriously, but none were killed.

"Up and give them a couple of volleys with the pistols!" cried Dick.

The youths leaped up and drew pistols and fired two volleys in quick succession.

Then they again dropped on their faces, for the redcoats were about to fire another volley.

Crash!—roar! the volley rang out, but the redcoats did not take good aim, or at any rate their shots were not very effective.

Two of the youths received slight wounds, but that was all.

"Up and give it to them again!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed. They leaped up and fired two pistol volleys, bringing down a number of the redcoats, dead and wounded.

Then, noting that the British were demoralized, Dick cried out:

"Charge them, Liberty Boys! Give it to them!"

The youths leaped the fence and dashed at the redcoats,

brandishing their muskets; and as soon as they were within striking distance the Liberty Boys began laying about them with the butts of their muskets.

The redcoats were so badly demoralized that they took to their heels and fled toward the timber at the rear of the house.

This was fifty yards distant, and the Liberty Boys followed, using their muskets as effectively as possible.

They had almost reached the edge of the timber, when suddenly Tom Benton came running after them, crying out:

"Some more redcoats are coming! There are a lot of 'em on horseback!"

Dick and the other Liberty Boys looked down the road in the direction of Paulus Hook and saw that the boy had spoken truly. A force of at least two hundred British dragoons was coming.

"There must have been a lot of dragoons at the fort, and they have come back to try to catch us!" cried Dick.

"That's right," agreed Bob; "but what are we to do?"

This was indeed a serious problem.

CHAPTER III.

LIGHT HORSE HARRY APPEARS.

"We haven't time to get back across the road," said Dick.

"No; they are too close," with a glance at the redcoats coming so swiftly.

"Into the house, all!" cried Dick; "it is our only chance."

The Liberty Boys realized that this was the case, and they hastened to enter the house, Tom and his sister entering with them.

They fastened up the doors and took up their stations at the windows—as many as could do so.

"I'm afraid that we are in a trap, boys!" said Dick.

"It looks that way," agreed Mark Morrison; "the infantry and dragoons, combined against us, will be too strong for us, without doubt."

"I don't know about that," said Bob Estabrook, who always looked on the bright side of things; "we are protected by the walls of the house, while the enemy is out in the open, where we can shoot them down."

"True," said Dick; "but what if they set the house on fire, as they were going to do awhile ago?"

Bob looked sober and shook his head.

"That would settle the affair, I guess," he acknowledged; "we would have to get out and the redcoats would have us at their mercy."

"That is it exactly, and I have no doubt that is what they will do, for we have killed and wounded a number of the members of that first party of dragoons, and have killed and wounded a number of the foot soldiers as well."

The Liberty Boys were busily engaged reloading their muskets and pistols, and they had finished by the time the dragoons had dismounted and tied their horses in the edge of the timber over across the road.

By this time the British infantry had learned what was going on and had come back, with the intention of co-operating with the dragoons and making a capture of the rebels.

Dick could not help noticing how cool and brave the girl, Kate Benton, was. She was slightly pale, but otherwise was calm and self-possessed, even though she knew that all within the house were in great danger.

She was a very pretty girl, Dick thought, and there were others of the Liberty Boys who thought the same; especially was this the case with Fred Pearson, a handsome young Liberty Boy and one of the bravest in the company. He was struck by the beauty of the girl at once, and he made up his mind that he would try to win her if ever the time came when he would not have to apply himself exclusively to the business of fighting redcoats.

The dragoons paused near where they had dismounted and held a council, after which one of their number advanced, carrying a white handkerchief as a flag of truce.

Dick promptly opened the door and stood there awaiting the man's approach.

The dragoon wore the uniform of a captain, and when he paused only a few feet from the door the two saluted each other.

"What do you want?" asked Dick.

He was pretty sure he knew, but would not let on.

"I have been sent, sir," was the reply, "to demand that you surrender."

"Oh, that is what you want us to do, eh?" with a calmness that must have surprised the British officer.

"Yes."

Dick shook his head.

"I must refuse to surrender," he said.

The redcoat looked surprised, now, of a certainty.

"You refuse to surrender?" he exclaimed, incredulously.

"Certainly; why not?"

"It is simple enough; we have two hundred men, and there are at least one hundred and fifty foot soldiers also. That makes a force of three hundred and fifty, while you cannot have more than one hundred."

"That is just the number," was the cool reply.

"And we have you cooped up in the house and can either starve you out or burn you out. Surely you will not force us to such an alternative?"

"Surely you would not set fire to the house?"

"Why not?"

"Because that would be barbarous—worthy of redskins, who could not be expected to know anything about civilized warfare."

"If you are warned, and still refuse to surrender, then you will be to blame, and not us."

"I do not look at the matter in that light."

"We do; then you refuse to surrender?"

"Yes."

"Very good; you will need to look out for yourselves."

"We shall try to do so."

The captain turned and strode away, and Dick closed and barred the door.

"I guess we are in for it, boys," he said, grimly.

"Yes; they will set the house on fire, sure," said Bob.

They watched the messenger and saw him rejoin the dragoons.

He talked to them earnestly, and then all looked toward the house.

Presently one was seen to leave his comrades and make a wide circuit, so as to approach the house from the end instead of from the side.

"He is going to set fire to the house!" said Dick; "and I don't see how we are going to prevent him from doing so."

The others said the same; there was no window in the end of the house, and they could not see the soldier at all; he could approach in safety, in spite of them.

It was galling, but they did not dare open the door and venture out to get a shot at the soldier, for they would themselves be shot down.

Dick went to the end of the room and placed his ear to the wall and listened intently.

At first he could hear nothing; then presently he heard a crackling noise, as of sticks burning and popping.

He turned a blank face toward his comrades.

"The fellow has started the fire!" he said.

"Then we may as well get ready to leave the house in a hurry," said Bob.

Dick nodded assent.

Bob nodded toward Tom and Kate Benton.

"Hadn't you better display a flag of truce and ask the British to let the boy and girl leave the house before we make the dash?" he asked.

"I was just thinking of doing that, Bob."

Dick started toward the door, and at this instant loud yells were heard, followed by the clatter of horses' hoofs and the firing of muskets.

"We are saved!" cried Mark Morrison, who was looking out of the window; "it is Light Horse Harry and his men!"

"Hurrah!" cried Bob; "we are all right, then!"

Dick jerked the bar down and threw the door open.

Sure enough a large party of patriot cavalry was making an attack on the British dragoons.

The dragoons fired a scattering volley as Light Horse Harry's force appeared, but the volley did not do a great deal of damage.

Light Horse Harry's men, however, did considerable execution and dropped a number of British dragoons, dead and wounded.

Light Horse Harry and his men dashed right through the British force, firing right and left with their pistols;

at such speed were they going that they went nearly one hundred yards beyond the redcoats before they could get their horses stopped. By the time they had whirled their horses and had started back, the British dragoons had mounted and were riding up the road as fast as they could make their horses go. There was a hill a quarter of a mile away, and the dragoons stopped when they reached the top of the hill, and, dismounting, made ready to offer battle.

Light Horse Harry and his men did not follow them, however; they stopped in front of the house to greet the Liberty Boys, who were emerging from the houses as rapidly as possible.

The party of British infantry had disappeared. It had seen what was coming and had retreated into the timber.

Bob Estabrook and Mark Morrison, accompanied by Tom Benton, ran around to the end of the house and kicked the brush away from the building. The brush only was burning; the house had not yet caught fire.

"There; the house is saved," said Bob.

"I'm awfully glad," said Tom; "father and mother would have been mighty sorry if they had come home and found the house burned down."

"I should think so," said Mark Morrison.

Meanwhile Dick Slater and Light Horse Harry were engaged in conversation. They knew each other well, and had worked together on more than one occasion.

"Where are your horses?" asked Light Horse Harry Lee.

"Over in the timber a quarter of a mile or so," was the reply.

"How came you to be cooped up in the house?"

Dick explained.

"Ah, so that was it, eh?" when Dick had finished.

"Yes."

"Well, I'm glad that myself and men happened along just when we did."

"So am I."

Then they turned their attention to the dead and wounded redcoats. Of the former there were thirty-two and of the latter there were twenty-three.

The groans of the wounded was something very unpleasant to hear, and Dick said that the poor fellows ought to be taken care of.

"Yes," agreed Light Horse Harry; "I will send a messenger up the hill, under protection of a flag of truce, and request that the British come and take care of their wounded and bury their dead."

This was done, Dick acting as the messenger.

He returned presently, followed by about fifty dragoons, who carried the wounded soldiers into the house and dressed the wounds as best they could.

Then they buried the dead soldiers, after which they returned to where the rest of the dragoons were on the hill.

"Now, you go and get your horses," said Light Horse

Harry to Dick; "and when you return we will mount and charge those redcoats on the hill."

"All right," said Dick. This appealed to him, and he knew the rest of the youths would be in for it.

The Liberty Boys crossed the road and entered the timber.

They had scarcely more than got out of sight in the timber before one of Light Horse Harry's men cried out, pointing toward the top of the hill:

"They are going to run away! See, they are mounting in hot haste!"

Such was indeed the case, and Light Horse Harry was at a loss to understand what had caused such precipitate action on the part of the dragoons.

Of a sudden, however, the reason occurred to him, and he laughed aloud.

"They thought the Liberty Boys were going to slip around and make an attack on them from one side, while we made an attack from the front!" he exclaimed. "That is why they are getting away in such hot haste."

"See them go!" cried a soldier, in a tone of derision.

"Let us go after them!" cried Light Horse Harry; "we will chase them as far north as possible, and may be able to cause them to be captured."

The men answered with cheers, and leaping into the saddles, Light Horse Harry and his men dashed away in pursuit of the British dragoons.

CHAPTER IV.

IN CAMP.

The Liberty Boys found their horses where they had left them.

They untied the animals and led them to the main road; here they mounted and galloped to the Benton home.

They were amazed to find that Light Horse Harry and his men were gone.

"Where did they go?" Dick asked of Tom Benton.

"Up the road in pursuit of the British dragoons," was the reply.

"That's strange; I thought they were going to wait for us."

"Just after you left," the boy explained, "the dragoons mounted and rode away, and Light Horse Harry and his men went in pursuit."

"Come, then, boys," said Dick; "we will follow and see if we can help."

They dashed away up the road and were soon over the hill and riding in pursuit of Light Horse Harry's band.

Far in advance of the Liberty Boys the two parties of horse soldiers were riding at the best speed of their horses.

Light Horse Harry's men were not gaining on the dragoons, so far as could be determined; neither could the Liberty Boys gain on Light Horse Harry's force.

Presently the British dragoons turned to the left into a road leading in that direction.

They did not wish to go any further north than was made necessary by their pursuers.

Light Horse Harry and his men followed.

And Dick and his men followed Light Horse Harry.

The British dragoons continued a couple of miles in the new direction, and then turned toward the south.

It was evident now that their horses were better than those of their pursuers. They were gradually widening the space between themselves and the patriots.

Dick and Bob had better horses than their comrades had, but it would do no good for them to pull ahead, so they went only so fast as the others could go.

They gained some on Light Horse Harry, but it would be a long time before they would catch up.

The patriot forces continued to chase the British dragoons until the latter were within half a mile of Paulus Hook, and then a halt was called.

Light Horse was afraid to venture nearer, for fear his men might be fired upon by the guns within the fort.

Dick and his Liberty Boys quickly came up with Light Horse Harry and his men, now that they had stopped.

"They have escaped, Captain Slater," said Light Horse Harry.

"Yes; their horses were too fast."

"Yes; the horses are but very little better than ours, but they had a good start and more than maintained it."

"So they did."

At this moment there came a startling interruption. There was the loud "Boom!" of a gun, and a cannon ball came whistling through the air.

It went above the heads of the patriots.

"Jove, we'll have to get away from here!" cried Bob Estabrook.

"That's right," from Mark Morrison.

"We will go back and see how affairs are at that farmhouse," said Light Horse Harry.

"Boom!" went another cannon, and a second missile went whistling over their heads.

"That is the signal for us to start," said Dick.

"So it is," from Light Horse Harry.

They rode northward, and although the redcoats fired at them several times with the gun, no damage resulted.

They drew long breaths of relief, however, when they were out of range.

"I feel better," said Sam Sanderson.

"Oh, I don't," said Bob Estabrook, with a grin; "I don't believe those redcoats could have hit us if they had tried a week."

"They might have hit us by accident," said Dick.

They rode northward, and presently came to the Benton home.

Here they dismounted, and Dick and Light Horse Harry went to the house.

It was just coming dusk.

Tom Benton came to the door, and when he saw the two, he gave utterance to an exclamation of satisfaction.

"I'm glad to see you again," he said; "did you catch the redcoats?"

"No," replied Dick; "they got safely back to the fort at Paulus Hook."

"That is too bad!"

"What became of the British infantry?" asked Light Horse Harry.

"They took those of the soldiers who were not badly wounded and went back to the fort as soon as you had gone."

"How many wounded soldiers have you still?"

"There are ten."

"Well, they will be quite a bother, but so long as they are in your house you will be safe; the redcoats won't bother you."

"That's so."

Light Horse Harry and Dick talked the matter over and decided to go into camp near the Benton home.

"By remaining here we will be close to the British at Paulus Hook," said Light Horse Harry; "and no doubt we will have a good chance to strike the redcoats a blow to-morrow."

"True," said Dick; "I am in favor of going into camp here."

They went back to the road and gave the order, and the soldiers of both parties made their way into the timber back of the stable and went into camp.

While thus engaged the farmer and his wife came home. They were amazed to find ten wounded British soldiers in their house, and to find, also, two or three hundred patriot soldiers encamped near at hand.

When they were told how the Liberty Boys had saved the house from being burned they felt very grateful toward the youths, and the farmer told Dick and Light Horse Harry to help themselves to feed for their horses, there being corn and oats in a large granary near the stable.

"I have a great deal more meat than we can use," Mr. Benton went on; "and you are welcome to all that you need."

"That will be very acceptable," said Light Horse Harry.

"Yes, indeed," from Dick.

Mr. Benton had a bin full of cornmeal, also, and he told the patriots to help themselves to it. They did so, and soon they were cooking Johnny-cakes and frying ham and pork.

They had a feast that evening, and that the men enjoyed it goes without saying.

Tom Benton came out and invited Light Horse Harry and Dick to come into the house and take supper with the family, and they accepted the invitation.

They had a better meal than they had eaten in a long time, and enjoyed it thoroughly.

"If we could have such fare as this all the time we

could easily thrash the redcoats," said Light Horse Harry, with a smile.

"So we could," agreed Dick.

"Yes, I should think so myself," agreed Mr. Benton; "hungry men could not be expected to be as strong for fighting as those who are well fed."

The two officers thanked Mr. and Mrs. Benton for their supper and then went back to the camp.

"Oh, here you are," said Bob, when Dick put in an appearance; "I suppose you have been reveling in luxuries while we have been eating pork and Johnny-cake."

"We certainly had a good supper, Bob."

"I'll wager that you did."

Presently Light Horse Harry came over to where Dick sat and engaged him in conversation.

"I have been thinking of something, Dick," he said.

"What, sir?" asked Dick.

"I have been wondering if it would be possible to capture the fort there on Paulus Hook."

"It is hard to say," said Dick, with a thoughtful air.

"It would be a great feather in our cap if we could do it."

"So it would."

"I wonder how many men they have in the fort?"

"Hard telling."

"I wish I knew; then we would have something tangible to work on."

"So we would."

"By taking them by surprise we would be able to overcome odds of three or four to one."

"Yes, so we would."

"Especially could we hope to succeed if we had a thorough knowledge of the lay of the land within the fort and all about the approaches and the best place to try to enter."

Dick started and an eager light appeared in his eyes.

"Say, why wouldn't it be a good idea for me to go down there and spy on the British?" he asked.

"Do you think you could do any good, Dick?"

"I might be able to do so. If I could get into the fort I would be in a position to learn all we wish to know."

"Yes, but getting into the fort is the difficulty."

"It would be difficult, true; but I might succeed in doing so. I am willing to make the attempt."

Light Horse Harry looked thoughtful and undecided.

"I don't want you to run any grave risks, Dick," he said; "I would like to learn those things we have spoken of, but I don't want that you shall take any desperate chances."

"I won't; I will be careful."

"Then you really wish to do this?"

"Yes, indeed; I am always ready to do anything I can to aid the great cause."

"When will you go, to-night?"

"No, I will wait till morning."

"What! Go in the daytime?"

"Yes; I think that will be best."

Light Horse Harry shook his head.

"I don't understand," he said.

"I'll explain. I am going to borrow an old horse and that light wagon I saw in the barnyard from Mr. Benton, and load some meat and potatoes into the wagon and drive down to the fort and sell the produce to the soldiers."

Light Horse Harry started.

"That may be successful," he said; "but what if you should be recognized?"

"I will have to take chances of that; I hardly think there are any in the fort who know me by sight."

"You will disguise yourself in some manner, will you not?"

"I will borrow some old clothes of Mr. Benton; he is about my size."

"That will be a good plan."

They talked the matter over in detail, and then, having seen that everything was all right for the night, the sentinels stationed, and everything attended to, they lay down on their blankets and went to sleep.

CHAPTER V.

DICK AND BOB AT PAULUS HOOK.

When Dick had changed his blue uniform for a suit of old clothing that had been thrown away by Mr. Benton next morning and donned an old slouch hat, he looked so different that Light Horse Harry nodded in approval.

"I wouldn't have believed that dress makes such a difference," he said; "I'll declare that, had I met you in the road and not been looking for you, I would hardly have recognized you."

"Then the redecoats, who saw me only briefly yesterday evening, will not be likely to recognize me in this rig."

"I think not."

"I am sure they won't; I shall feel pretty safe."

"You will change your voice, will you not; you know some people have a better memory for voices than for faces, and they might recognize you by that."

"I know; I will affect a nasal twang that will fool them."

Light Horse Harry looked sober and thoughtful.

"I am afraid that you are undertaking a very dangerous thing," he said.

But Dick said he did not think so, and that he had no fears.

Bob insisted that there should be two of them, and so Dick consented to let Bob accompany him.

Bob dressed up in an old suit that had been discarded, and when he was ready they got into the wagon and drove away.

"This is the kind of work I like, Dick," said Bob, as they drove down the road.

"Well, I don't mind it myself, Bob."

They drove slowly along and half an hour later they arrived at Paulus Hook—or rather, on the mainland just opposite to the Hook.

The fort was separated from the shore by a creek, across which was an earth levee wide enough to drive across on.

They were challenged by a sentinel before they got to the end of the levee, however.

They halted, and Dick, in a nasal, twanging voice, explained that they wished to cross the levee and go up to the fort and sell some meat and potatoes to the soldiers.

"Oh, that's what you want, is it" the sentinel asked.

"Yes."

The soldier hesitated. He looked the youths over, sized them up as being boys and harmless, and told them to drive on.

They did so.

They drove slowly across the levee, and at the farther end were challenged by another sentinel.

"Who are you and what do you want?"

Dick explained, stating that they were a couple of country boys, and that they had some meat and potatoes that they wished to sell to the soldiers in the fort.

"All right; drive on. I guess the boys will be glad to buy."

"I hope so, mister."

Dick drove on, and was soon right up close to the fort.

The soldiers came over the entrenchments and surrounded the wagon quickly.

"'Ello; what 'ave you 'ere?" asked one of the soldiers.

"Sumthin' thet you men'll like, mister," said Dick.

"Ha! Meat and potatoes, eh?" from another.

"Yes."

"How do you sell them?"

"Cheap, mister; cheap. Whut'll ye hev—meat er per-taters, er both?"

"Some of both, my boy."

"All right; here ye air, mister."

Dick sold the meat and potatoes quickly and then looked toward the fort with an air of curiosity.

"Say, I never wuz in er fort in my life," he said; "mought I got in theer?"

"Certainly," said one of the soldiers, good-naturedly.

"Come right along with me."

"All right, mister."

Then he turned to his comrade and said:

"Ye stay heer an' hold the horse, Bob."

"All right," was the reply; "but don' be long."

"I won't; but I guess ez how I want er fort. I may never git another chanst."

"Well, don' ye s'pose I want er ther inside uv er fort, too?"

"Thet's so, Bob; I guess I'm kinder selfish, hain't I?"

"I guess ye air; say, ole Bulger'll stan' heer without enny holdin'. Ye couldn' make 'im run erway if ye tried."

"Thet's so; come erlong, Bob."

Bob jumped down out of the wagon and went along with Dick and the British soldier.

They climbed over the embankment and were within the fort.

The two youths were good actors, and they played their parts to perfection. They stared about them with the air of youths who had never before seen anything of the kind, and they inquired freely, managing to ask such questions as would elicit information, and also throwing in some that aided in giving them the appearance of being the green country youths they professed to be.

The soldier was amused, and he laughingly answered their questions, giving them much information regarding the fort, its strong and weak points, the number of men in the fort, and everything.

Dick and Bob were delighted, and it was an easy matter for them to show enthusiasm and interest.

While they were thus engaged a boat was pulling across from New York. In it were three men, two of whom were common soldiers, the other being a British colonel.

Dick and Bob did not know the boat was coming, and likely would have thought nothing about it had they known.

When the boat reached the Hook the officer stepped ashore and entered the fort.

He went to the quarters occupied by the commander of the fort and held a conversation with him.

When they had finished their talk this officer came out of headquarters, and as he did so he came face to face with the soldier who was conducting Dick and Bob about the fort.

The colonel stopped and looked at the two youths keenly and searchingly as they passed.

Then he glanced around him and beckoned to some soldiers who were standing near.

"Do you know who those two young fellows are?" he asked, in a low, cautious voice.

"A couple of country boys," was the reply.

"Country boys, eh?"

"Yes. They brought some meat and potatoes and sold to the soldiers."

"What are they doing in here?"

"They wanted to see inside a real fort."

"Oh, that is it, eh?"

"Yes; they had never seen anything of the kind, and were naturally eager to do so."

"Hm," said the colonel; "you may be right, and they may be all right, but somehow I am suspicious that they are not what they are pretending to be."

"You don't?" in surprise.

"No."

"Who and what do you think they are, then?"

"Well, I wouldn't be surprised if they were rebel spies!"

"What!"

"Yes. There is an air about them quite different—so it seems to me—from what would be worn by a couple of green country boys."

"What shall we do about it?"

"Wait a moment and I will speak to the commander of the fort and see what he says."

The colonel hastened to do so, and the commander of the fort said, promptly:

"We'll arrest them and make an investigation."

Then the two officers hastened out, and the commander said to some soldiers standing near:

"Arrest those two youths and bring them here."

The soldiers started at once.

Dick and Bob had noticed that something was going on; they were wide awake, had seen the colonel talking with the soldiers, and had seen him go back to the commander's quarters. Then, when the two officers emerged, and the commander said something to some soldiers, who started toward the youths, Dick and Bob knew that they were suspected and were to be seized and made prisoners.

They had been working around toward the side of the fort, where they had left the horse and wagon, and now Dick gave Bob a signal, and they suddenly darted away, ran up the embankment and down on the farther side.

"Stop! Stop!" yelled the soldiers; but of course the youths did not pay any attention. They were intent on getting away.

They had learned all that it was necessary to know, and wished to get away.

They ran to the wagon and leaped in.

A score or more of soldiers appeared on the top of the embankment at this moment, all yelling to the youths to stop.

Dick and Bob paid no more attention than would have been the case had they not heard.

Dick seized the lines and an old whip that lay in the bottom of the wagon, and yelling to the horse to "Get up!" gave him a cut with the whip.

The horse, startled and surprised, leaped forward so suddenly that Bob was thrown down in the wagon-bed, and Dick would have been served the same way but for the fact that he had hold of the lines.

"Stop, or we will fire!" roared a stentorian-voiced soldier.

On dashed the horse. The wagon was a light one, and the animal pulled it along at a lively rate.

The soldiers did not fire, but instead yelled to the sentinel to stop the fugitives.

He leaped out in the middle of the levee and brandished his arms and yelled so fiercely that the horse was frightened. The animal did not stop, however, but swerved to one side and ran down the side of the levee, upsetting the wagon and throwing Dick and Bob head over heels into the creek.

The water was not deep, but the youths were submerged when they fell, and when they struggled to their feet they were soaking wet.

They were a bedraggled-looking couple; but so far as that was concerned, Dick figured that it would help dis-

guise them in case the colonel thought that he knew them.

The horse did not drag the wagon far after it upset. Something about the harness broke and the animal went on, leaving the wagon behind.

The frightened horse reached the mainland and dashed away up the road, soon disappearing from view in the timber.

Dick and Bob would have tried to reach the mainland, but the score or more of soldiers appeared on the levee at a point within twenty feet of the two and leveled their muskets, while one cried, sternly:

"Surrender, or we will fire! Come right up here where we are, if you want to live!"

CHAPTER VI.

PRISONERS.

The youths saw there was no use of trying to escape, and so they walked out of the water and climbed up to the top of the levee.

Although they had been through enough in the last few minutes to "rattle" almost anyone, yet they were cool and clear-headed, and were ready to play their parts to the end.

"Say, mister, what does this heer mean, ennyhow?" asked Dick, the water dripping from hair and clothes.

"Thet's what I'd like ter know, too," from Bob.

"Come on back into the fort and it will be explained to you," said one of the soldiers.

They conducted the youths back into the fort, where they were met by the two officers, who looked the two over and then laughed in spite of their evident desire to look sober and severe.

"Aren't they a pretty looking pair, Colonel Hampton?" said the commander of the fort.

"I should say they are!" was the reply.

They got their faces straightened, and then the commander said, sternly:

"Who are you two young fellows?"

"We live up in ther country," replied Dick.

"They didn't act like common country youths," said Colonel Hampton; "they acted more like young fellows who have had some military training."

"Ye're mistook, mister," said Dick; "we air country boys, an' hain't had no milingtery trainin'."

The commander looked at them sternly:

"I believe that you are rebel spies!" he said. "If you were not, why did you run away just now? You actions are suspicious."

The youths shook their heads energetically and busied themselves with wringing the water out of their clothes.

"Ye're mistook, mister," said Dick; "we hain't no spies."

"I rather think they are spies," said the colonel.

"I am of the same opinion," from the commander; "and I think that I will make them prisoners and send them over to New York in your boat."

"Very good; I will take them to headquarters and General Clinton can pass judgment on them."

Dick and Bob did not like this idea at all.

They felt that they were in considerable danger.

General Clinton was a man whom it would be difficult to deceive. He had seen Dick two or three times, and would in all probability recognize him.

The Liberty Boys felt that they must not permit themselves to be taken across to New York and to British headquarters if they could possibly help it.

There was the rub, however.

They did not see how they were to help it.

It was useless for them to try to get away now.

They were surrounded and could not hope to make their escape.

So when the soldiers proceeded to bind their arms, on being ordered to do so by the commander of the fort, Dick and Bob made no resistance.

They held their arms in such a position, however, as to make it impossible for the redcoats to bind their wrists very tightly.

"I'll send a couple of my men along with you, if you wish, colonel," said the commander.

"No, there are two soldiers in the boat, and that will be sufficient. The prisoners won't be able to escape."

The commandant said that the officer and two soldiers certainly ought to be sufficient to handle two youths with hands tied together behind them; and then he ordered that the prisoners be conducted to the boat.

This was done, and then the colonel entered the boat, bade the other officer goodby, and the oarsman pulled slowly away toward the New York side of the river.

Dick and Bob looked at each other ruefully, but said nothing.

It would do no good to talk, and they might say something that would accentuate the belief already existing in the minds of the redcoats to the effect that the two were patriot spies.

Presently the colonel spoke.

"Well, I guess you two young fellows have got yourselves into deep trouble," he said.

"We seem ter be in trubble," agreed Dick; "but theer hain't no reason why we should be, mister, fur we hain't no rebel spies, ez ye seem to think."

"For your own good, I hope that you are not."

"Well, we hain't."

"That remains to be seen."

"I hope the man where ye air takin' us'll see et mighty quick an' let us go."

"I don't know whether he will see you right away or not. I will have to take you to jail and keep you there till he is ready to see you."

The youths were glad to hear this.

They had feared they would be taken direct to headquarters, and that General Clinton would recognize Dick. Now, however, if they were to be taken to jail and held there they would have time to attempt to escape.

When the east shore of the Hudson was reached, the two Liberty Boys were taken ashore and conducted to the old sugar house, which was used as a jail at that time by the British.

The youths were conducted into the sugar house and, after they had been searched and it was found that they had no weapons—they had thought it advisable not to wear any that day—their arms were freed and they were left there with about a dozen other patriot prisoners.

The heavy door was closed and fastened, and then Dick and Bob looked at each other and shook their heads.

"We are having a bad streak of luck, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes, so we are; but we may come out all right in the end."

It happened that Dick and Bob did not know any of the other prisoners, nor did any of the prisoners know them.

"Who are you two fellows, anyway?" asked one of the men, looking at the youths with interest.

The youths did not know but there might be a British spy among the dozen, pretending to be a prisoner, in order to hear what the men said, so they decided to keep their identities a secret.

"We live up in the country a ways," said Dick; "we came to the fort over at Paulus Hook this morning with a load of meat and potatoes, which we sold to the soldiers."

"And they made prisoners of you?"

"Yes; they said they believed we were rebel spies, and made prisoners of us."

"How did you get wet? Did you jump out of the boat as you were being brought over?"

"No." Then Dick explained how they had got so wet.

"Well, you two fellows were pretty bold, anyway, to try to escape under such unfavorable circumstances," said one of the soldiers.

The others all said the same.

"If the horse hadn't got frightened and run off the levee we might have escaped," said Bob.

"That's so; still you might have got shot to death."

"Yes, that's so, too."

The youths soon got acquainted with the other prisoners, and when they had been there an hour or two had become assured of the fact that there was no redcoat among them.

Having become satisfied regarding this, Dick and Bob told the others who they were.

They told their fellow-prisoners not to mention their names when any of the British were around, however, for Dick, especially, had done the work of a spy so much that the British would have been delighted to know that they had him in their clutches. There was, indeed, a reward of five hundred pounds offered for Dick's capture.

All the patriots in the old sugar house had heard of Dick Slater, and they were glad to know him, but sorry to make his acquaintance under such circumstances.

"Oh, well, perhaps we may be able to escape," said Dick. The men shook their heads.

"We have been here two months," said one; "and we have not seen any chance to make our escape."

"That may be true, and still there might come a chance this very day."

"Well, that is so, too, I guess."

"I wish that it would turn out that way," from another.

"Come, Dick; let's make a tour of investigation," said Bob. "Maybe we can find a weak spot somewhere."

"If you do you will do more than we fellows have been able to do," said one.

Dick and Bob started on a tour of investigation.

They found that the sugar house was well built. It was so strong at the sides and ends that it would be impossible to break out, and the doors—one at the front and one at the rear—were strongly-barred on the outside. The one window was in the front, and two sentinels, muskets in hands, were always on guard there.

"We told you so," said one of the men, when the youths had finished making the round of the building.

"I knew it would be," from another; "you see, there is no possible chance for us to escape."

"We are not through yet," said Dick; "now Bob, let's examine the floor."

"That's so; I never thought of the floor," said one.

"Neither did I," from another.

A couple of the prisoners were stationed near the window watching the guards, and whenever one of these approached the window to look in, they gave the warning, and Dick and Bob ceased making their examinations of the floor, and pretended to be earnestly engaged in conversation with the rest. Then, as soon as the guard turned away, they went to work again.

They made a careful examination of the floor, but could not find any weak spot in it; it would be impossible to break through the floor, unless they had tools to do the work with.

They shook their heads when they had finished.

"No chance of getting through there, eh?" remarked one of the other prisoners.

"None at all," replied Dick.

"That is too bad; I guess you will have to make up your minds to stay till you are let out, the same as we were forced to do."

"We haven't given up yet," said Dick, quietly.

"You haven't?" in surprise; "why, where is there any other ground that hasn't been gone over?"

Dick pointed upward.

"There," he said.

The man uttered an exclamation.

"The roof!" he cried.

"Exactly; the roof looks to be rather weak, compared to the strength of the building."

"But how will you get up to the roof? It is twelve feet to the rafters where they reach the top of the wall."

Dick smiled.

"If the rest did not trouble me any more than that we would be all right," he said.

"Well, I don't see how you can do it; we have no ladder, not even a board."

"We don't need any."

"How will you get up there, then?"

"That is easy; I will stand a good, stout man up against the wall and climb up onto his shoulders. I will be able to reach the rafters from that position, and can pull myself up. As the roof is made of clapboards, I feel confident that I can find a place where I can remove some of the boards and climb out."

The patriot prisoners became excited at once.

"That is a good plan," said one; "I almost believe that we shall be able to make our escape."

"I hope that we may," said another.

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE OLD SUGAR HOUSE.

The prisoners discussed the matter of making an attempt at escaping.

Those who had been in the old sugar house so long were eager and excited.

They wanted to make their escape.

They looked to Dick and Bob to make this possible.

They were very hopeful, now that they knew who the two youths were. They felt that if anybody could find a way to escape, the two in question could.

"We will see what can be done to-night," said Dick.

"Yes; if we don't get out of this place to-night it will be strange," said Bob.

"I hope that we may succeed in doing so," said one of the prisoners.

At noon food was brought for the prisoners, and they ate as heartily as was possible under the circumstances, the food being anything but good or palatable.

It was a long day, so Dick and Bob thought. It seemed as though night would never come.

It did come at last, however, but even then they felt that it would not be advisable to try to get out of the prison until away in the middle of the night.

"We will wait till midnight," said Dick; "and then we will see what we can do."

Shortly after supper that evening the door opened and some British soldiers entered.

They bound Dick's and Bob's wrists together behind their backs and conducted the youths out of the building, closing and barring the door behind them.

Then they led the two up the street.

"Where are you taking us?" asked Dick.

"To headquarters," was the reply.

"Oh, that's where we are going, is it?"

"Yes."

Dick and Bob did not like this at all.

Dick feared that he would be recognized, for he knew that General Clinton had seen him two or three times.

Still, he might not do so, as Dick did not look much like himself in the old suit of ragged, ill-fitting clothing and the old slouch hat.

The probabilities were that the hat would be removed when he was taken into the presence of the British general, however.

It was not a very long walk to British headquarters.

There was no delay when they got there; they were conducted right into the building and to the private room of General Clinton.

When the two prisoners were standing in front of him, the general looked at them keenly and somewhat curiously.

"Take off their hats," ordered the general.

The soldiers did so.

Then the British officer looked at the two searchingly.

There was no light of recognition in his eyes when he was looking at Bob, but when he turned his gaze on Dick he gave a start and uttered an exclamation.

"Ha!" he cried; "whom have we here?"

Of course, Dick did not answer. He did not intend rendering the British officer any assistance if he could possibly keep from doing so.

"I have seen you before, young man," the general said, slowly and thoughtfully; "now the question is, Where have I seen you?"

Still Dick was silent.

The general gazed at Dick for almost a minute and then said:

"What is your name?"

"Abe Barker," replied Dick, in a drawling, nasal tone of voice.

The officer shook his head.

"I don't believe that is your name," he said.

"Yes et is."

The general told one of the British soldiers to brush the prisoner's hair back from his forehead.

This was done, and then General Clinton gave a look at Dick and uttered an exclamation of satisfaction.

"I thought so," he said; "I know you now. You are Dick Slater, the rebel spy!"

"Ye air mistook, mister," said Dick.

But the general shook his head.

"No, I am not mistaken," he said; "I know you, Dick Slater, and I must say that I am exceedingly glad to see you."

Dick saw there was no use trying to deceive the officer, and so he said, in his own natural voice:

"I can't say that I am glad to see you, sir, under the present circumstances."

"I suppose not," with a smile.

He looked thoughtfully at the youths for a few moments, and then to Dick he said:

"Who is your companion?"

Dick was quick-witted, and an idea struck him. He felt that he might secure Bob's release by pretending that the youth was a simple country fellow, so he said:

"He is a country boy who lives a few miles over in New Jersey. It was his horse and wagon and his produce that we sold to the soldiers over in the fort on Paulus Hook. He had nothing to do with my coming to the fort, and I hope you will let him go free.

The general shook his head.

"He has been caught in bad company," he said; "I fear that I shall be forced to doubt your story."

"It is true, nevertheless; he is in no way to blame, and, so far as I know, is a loyal king's man."

"That's right, I am," said Bob, who knew what Dick was trying to do; "that is ter say," he went on, "dad is er loyal king's man, an' I s'pose I will be when I git ter be er man."

But General Clinton was not to be deceived.

"You may be telling the truth, and you may not be," he said; "I shall have to assume that the latter is the case and hold your companion a prisoner, Captain Slater."

"That is too bad. I am sorry that I got you into trouble," this to Bob. And then he explained to General Clinton:

"I was walking along the road over in New Jersey, when I was overtaken by this young fellow. He said he was going to the fort to sell some meat and produce to the soldiers, and I asked to be permitted to accompany him. I saw it would be a good chance for me to spy on your soldiers in the fort. He said for me to jump in, and I did so. We went to the fort, and I helped him sell his produce; then we went into the fort to look around, and one of your officers was suspicious of us, and we were made prisoners. I hope you will let my young friend go, however, for he is not to blame at all, and as you have just heard him say, his father is a loyalist, and he expects to be one."

But General Clinton was not to be persuaded.

"It won't hurt him to remain here a prisoner a few days," he said. "Then, if it is proved that what you say about him is the truth, we will let him go."

"Very well," said Dick; "you will find that what I have told you is the truth."

The general asked Dick numerous questions, but could not get any satisfaction out of him.

He realized this presently, and told the men to take the two prisoners back to jail.

This was done, and when the two had been taken away the general summoned his orderly and told him that he wished the officers of the staff to report to him as soon as possible.

The orderly bowed and withdrew.

Half an hour later the officers of the staff were in the room.

There was a look of satisfaction on the general's face, and he looked at the officers and said:

"Gentlemen, you are aware that we have a couple of prisoners in the old sugar house—two young fellows who were captured over at the fort on Paulus Hook this morning."

The officers nodded assent.

"I just had the two before me," the general went on.

"Indeed?" remarked General Cornwallis, interrogatively.

"Yes; and you would not easily guess who one of those two prisoners really is."

The officers shook their heads.

"I suppose not," one remarked.

"I am sure you could not guess, so will tell. One of the prisoners in question is Dick Slater, the famous rebel spy!"

"What!" exclaimed several in chorus.

"Is that indeed the case, General Clinton?" exclaimed General Cornwallis; "there is no mistake about the matter?"

"There is no mistake, General Cornwallis; I know Dick Slater, and the prisoner in question is no other than he."

"Well, we are in luck, then."

"That is what I think; the men had no idea they had made an important capture. They simply arrested the two on suspicion, thinking they might be rebel spies, but without really believing that such was the case."

The officers discussed the capture of Dick Slater for some time.

They realized that in capturing the famous spy they had done a good thing for the king's cause.

"You will need to be careful, General Clinton," said General Cornwallis; "Dick Slater is a slippery fellow and may escape."

"I don't think there is any possible chance for him to escape from the old sugar house."

"Perhaps you are right; I would be sure of the matter, however, by stationing a strong guard about the building."

"There are sentinels on guard there. He could not possibly escape."

Meanwhile the soldiers had conducted Dick and Bob back to the old sugar house and locked them in.

"Your attempt to get the general to set me free was a failure, Dick," said Bob.

"Yes, so it was. I hoped that it would work, but the general seems determined to hold onto you till he is sure about you."

"I don't blame him; do you?"

"No."

The other prisoners were eager to learn what the British commander-in-chief had wanted, and the youths told their comrades what had passed between them and the British general.

Then the talk turned to the matter of making their escape.

"Do you two fellows still feel that it is possible for us to make our escape?" asked one.

"Yes," said Dick; "we are going to try to get away, anyway."

"Good! I hope that we will succeed."

"So do I."

They lay down and pretended to go to sleep at about the hour the prisoners usually lay down, but, as may well be supposed, not one closed his eyes in sleep.

They were too eager and excited to sleep.

It was past midnight when at last Dick sat up and said, in a cautious voice:

"The time has come, men. We will begin work."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE ESCAPE.

The patriot prisoners rose cautiously to their feet.

It was dark in the sugar house. They were not allowed to have a light at night, and so far as that was concerned, they did not want one, particularly, at any time; and on this night they would have been handicapped greatly by a light.

As it was, they could work without danger of being seen by a sentinel in case he looked through the window.

They knew the looks of the inside of the building so well that they had no need of a light, anyway.

Among the prisoners was a large man by the name of Jack Hanford. Dick spoke to him in a cautious voice and told him to take up his position against the wall.

The man did so, and then Dick, assisted by Bob, climbed to Hanford's shoulders.

He reached up and felt around till he got hold of a couple of rafters; then he pulled himself up, and, getting a hold on the top of the sill that ran along underneath the ends of the rafters, held on with one hand and felt of the clapboards above his head with the other.

He worked his way slowly along, trying every clapboard as he went, and finally a thrill went through him. He had found a board that was not very tightly fastened.

"I believe I can get that one loose," thought Dick; "and if so, I will not have a great deal of trouble in loosening the rest."

He worked at the board, and at last succeeded in getting it loose.

He called to Bob cautiously and passed the board down to him.

There was an opening a couple of feet long and six inches wide, where the board had been, and Dick went to work to enlarge this opening.

The work was not so very difficult, now that he had got a start, but he had to work slowly and carefully to keep

from making a noise that might be heard by the sentinels. He was not more than ten minutes in getting the next board off, however, and he passed it down to Bob.

The opening was now a foot wide and two long.

By turning sideways Dick succeeded in pulling himself up through the opening. It was a tight squeeze, however, and he made up his mind that it would be best to pull off one more clapboard.

He went to work, and as he was now above the board and could pull upward, he had no trouble in getting it loose.

This made the opening wide enough, and Dick let himself down through it and handed the clapboard to Bob.

"How is everything, Dick?" asked Bob; "have you got the opening big enough?"

"Yes, Bob," was the reply; "there is an opening two feet long and a foot and a half wide; that ought to be sufficient for our purpose."

"Yes; that is large enough."

"Wait till I size up the situation," said Dick; "then we will see about getting out of here."

He again climbed up through the opening and listened intently. He could hear the murmur of voices away around toward the front of the building.

"The sentinels are having a friendly chat," he told himself; "well, that is all the better for our purpose. When they are talking their minds are on their conversation and they won't be so likely to hear us."

It was so dark that there was but little danger of them being seen. A sentinel would have to be within two yards of a person to see him, and it was Dick's intention that none of the patriots should get that close to a sentinel, if such a thing could be avoided.

He climbed back down through the opening and let himself down, dropping lightly to the floor.

"How is everything, old man?" asked Bob.

"Everything is all right, Bob. The only thing that is worrying me now is, How are we to get to the ground from the roof without alarming the sentinels and bringing them upon us. We could drop with perfect safety, I feel sure, so far as danger of being injured by the drop is concerned; but we would almost certainly make noise enough so that the sentinels would hear us."

"I'll tell you what let's do, Dick," said Bob.

"Go ahead."

"Let's tear up half a dozen coats, tie the stripes together, and thus improvise a rope down which we can slide and reach the ground without making any noise."

"That is a splendid idea, Bob," said Dick. "Off with your coats, half a dozen of you."

The coats were quickly doffed and their owners tore them up into strips, being careful to not make the strips so slight as to cause them to break when a man's weight came on them.

When the coats had been torn up into strips the ends of the strips were tied together and a rude rope was thus improvised.

It was about fifteen feet long, which was sufficient length for the purpose it was to serve, Dick was sure.

He took one end of the rope in his hand and climbed up on Jack Hanford's shoulders, with Bob's help, and then pulled himself up through the opening.

He tied the end of the rope to a rafter and then pulled the rope up through the opening and dropped it down on the outside of the building.

Then he stuck his head down through the opening and called down, cautiously:

"Ready! Come ahead as fast as you can without making any noise."

Soon one of the men was up beside Dick, who was out on the roof, holding himself there by grasping the side of the opening.

"Now take hold of the rope and let yourself down, hand over hand, slowly and carefully," whispered Dick.

"All right," was the whispered reply. The man's voice trembled, but it was not from fear. He was eager and excited over the prospect of making his escape from the prison-pen, that was all.

Slowly he disappeared down the rope. He was out of Dick's sight by the time he was six feet away, and the Liberty Boy knew there was not much danger of the man being seen. All that was necessary was that caution should be observed to prevent any noise from being made.

By the time the first man had reached the ground another was beside Dick at the opening, and the youth instructed him the same as he had the first one.

One after another the patriots climbed up and out through the opening, and then made their way down the rope.

Bob was the last one, and as there was no one to stand against the wall and make a ladder for him to climb up on, Dick pulled the rope up from the outside and dropped it down on the inside. Bob then climbed the rope and was soon through the opening.

Then the rope was pulled up and dropped down on the outside of the building once more and Dick told Bob to go down.

The youth obeyed at once and made his way down the rope.

He gave a jerk on the rope when he had reached the ground, and then Dick made his way down.

At this moment footsteps were heard approaching.

It was no doubt a sentinel who was coming.

"Line up against the wall of the building and stand perfectly still," whispered Dick.

The men obeyed. Their good sense told them that this was the best thing they could do. Had they tried to get away they would unavoidably have made sufficient noise so that the sentinel would have heard them.

Closer and closer sounded the footsteps.

The patriots flattened themselves against the side of the building and stood as silent as death.

Closer and closer still, and the sentinel was even with them, and only three or four yards away.

The patriots fairly held their breath.

They did not wish to be discovered now. They were in New York among the British, and they did not as yet know how they were to get across the river. They hoped to be able to find a boat, but were sure that they could do so, and if their escape was discovered and the alarm was raised, they would not have any time or chance to look for a boat, but would have to bend all their energies toward the work of making their escape.

The sentinel did not suspect that the prisoners had escaped and were standing within ten feet of him; in blissful ignorance of this fact he paced slowly along.

It was his duty to walk entirely around the sugar house once every hour, and that was what he was doing now.

He passed onward, and turned the corner, his footsteps dying gradually away, and when they were no longer audible Dick whispered to the men to come with him.

He led the way, and they were soon moving slowly and cautiously down toward the river.

When they reached the edge of the stream they began searching for a boat.

They moved along the shore slowly, and at last had the good fortune to find a boat.

Just as they did so they heard yells coming from the direction of the sugar house.

"Our escape has been discovered!" exclaimed Dick; "into the boat, all of you, as quickly as possible!"

The boat was shoved into the water, and then the men climbed in and seated themselves in the best positions possible. The boat was rather small to hold so many, but by exercising care it would be possible to get across the river in safety.

The only difficulty was that they would not be able to go very fast. If the British had boats near at hand and came in pursuit, then it would be a difficult matter to escape.

There could be little doubt that the British had boats handy, and so Dick told the two men who were rowing to put their best efforts into the work.

The men did so, and the boat moved through the water as rapidly as could be expected under the circumstances.

Soon lights were seen along the shore; the redcoats had lanterns.

Then, a few minutes later, the patriots saw by the lantern lights some British soldiers getting into two boats, which were pushed off by other soldiers on the shore.

A man sat in the bow of each of the boats holding a lantern, and Dick said he was glad of this.

"They are doing just what I would have asked them to do," he said; "we can know where they are by the lights, and they can't know where we are at all."

Evidently the British expected that the fugitives would go as straight across the stream as was possible, for they headed straight across; Dick, however, instructed the oarsmen to head the boat up the stream and across toward the farther shore. In this manner the British were thrown off the track.

The patriots reached the shore presently and disembarked.

"Thank goodness, we have escaped!" said one of them.

"Yes, so we have," said Dick.

"Only to be captured again!" said a stern voice from among the trees near at hand. "Surrender, rebels, or die!"

CHAPTER IX.

A DARING PLAN.

That the patriots were startled may well be understood.

Just at the moment when they were congratulating themselves on having escaped they were challenged and ordered to surrender or die.

They were without arms of any kind, all their weapons having been removed when they were taken prisoners.

It was impossible to show fight, with any hope of success, if there was much of a party of the enemy, and the chances were that there were at least as many redcoats as there were patriots.

What, then, should they do?

Each and every patriot asked himself this question, and each and every one knew it would be impossible for them to re-enter the boat and get away; they would be riddled with bullets before they could accomplish this.

There was only one thing, indeed, that they could do, and that was to leap into the water and make the attempt to escape by swimming up or down the stream and making a landing where there were no enemies.

All this passed through their minds in an instant, as it were, and when Dick suddenly cried, "Into the water, all!" they knew what he meant, and threw themselves backward into the waters of the Hudson River.

Splash, splash, splash, splash!

So nearly did the patriots come to all leaping at the same moment that not to exceed four splashes were heard.

Dick and Bob were perfectly at home in the water, even though weighted down with their clothing. They were splendid swimmers and all the patriots in the party were good swimmers.

By a common impulse, seemingly, the patriots struck out up the stream. They reasoned that the British would be more likely to take it for granted that the fugitives would go the way it would be easiest for them to go, which would be downstream with the outgoing tide.

They were careful to not make any more noise than they could help.

The redcoat who had challenged them was the leader of a party of about a dozen soldiers, who had seen the lanterns being carried by the British on the other side of the stream when the boats were being looked for to be used in the chase after the escaping patriots, and had come down to the shore to learn, if possible, what the excite-

ment was about. It happened that they were at the very spot where the patriots landed, and had heard what was said by them. The leader had then remarked that they had escaped, only to be captured again, and had ordered them to surrender or die.

Then the fugitives had leaped into the water, and this action had taken the British by surprise. They had thought of firing, but realized that it would be a waste of ammunition, because of the fact that they could not see to take aim, and so they refrained from doing so.

"Let us divide into two parties and part of the force go up stream and part down stream," the leader cried.

"All right," replied one, and then this was done.

They moved slowly and listened intently. Now and then they thought they heard splashing sounds out in the stream, and they were sure the sounds must be made by the fugitives.

"They will have to try to land presently," said one.

"Yes, and then we will capture them," from another.

But they were dealing with men who were keen and shrewd; moreover, the patriots were working to escape, and they were men who valued freedom and liberty more than they valued life.

One after another they managed to reach the shore; it was so dark the redcoats could not see them, and all that was necessary was for them to be careful not to make any noise.

They were men who did not need any instructions, once they were on the land, and they made their way into the timber and away in the direction of the point where they had been informed they would find the Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men encamped.

Dick and Bob kept close together, as was their wont, and they landed at the same time and place.

They heard some of the redcoats moving along a short distance away, and lay still right at the edge of the water till the British soldiers had gone on.

Then they crept up to the timber and in among the trees, and, rising to their feet, hastened away in the direction of the point where the patriot encampment lay.

They were not much at fault in their reckoning, and half an hour later they arrived at the encampment.

They were challenged, of course, but as soon as they told who they were they were permitted to pass on into the camp.

It was now about three o'clock in the morning, and the youths were careful not to awaken anyone. They waited till the other escaped patriots put in an appearance, and then all changed their clothing and lay down and went to sleep.

It did not seem to be any time at all before they were awake again; yet several hours had elapsed; it was broad daylight.

The camp was astir, and many of the soldiers were getting ready to cook their breakfasts. It was not until Dick and Bob and their companions rose to a sitting posture that the Liberty Boys and the other soldiers gave them

attention, and then practically all in the encampment came crowding around to hear the news.

Light Horse Harry came pushing through the crowd, and he shook hands with Dick and Bob, and asked them where they had found the other men, and who they were.

Dick explained, and all listened to the story he had to tell with the closest attention and the greatest interest.

"We knew something had happened to you," said Light Horse Harry; "for the horse you had driven away in the morning came trotting home about the middle of the forenoon. The wagon and a portion of the harness was missing, and we knew you had met with bad luck of some kind, though we could not think what it could be."

"I suppose the most reasonable supposition was that we had had a runaway," said Dick.

"Yes, but when the hours rolled away and you did not put in an appearance we began to feel pretty certain that you had been captured."

Then Dick and Light Horse Harry went to the house and Dick was given a hearty welcome by the members of the Benton family. They congratulated him on making his escape after having been a prisoner in the hands of the British.

"I am sorry that we were the means of you losing your wagon," said Dick.

"Oh, that is all right," said Mr. Benton; "the wagon will not be much loss if I never get it again."

"I don't think it was broken," said Dick; "and if you can get it back you will find it in good condition."

Then he and Light Horse Harry held a conversation regarding the possibilities of making an attack on Paulus Hook and capturing some of the garrison. Of course, it would be impossible to do more than capture some of the soldiers and some arms and ammunition, and it would be a daring thing to attempt to do even this.

Dick had secured so much information regarding the fort, its weak and strong points, and the number of men in the garrison that it would give the patriots a great advantage, especially when in addition to this they took the British by surprise.

"What do you think about the matter, anyway, Dick?" his companion asked.

Dick pondered awhile.

"Well," he said; "if we are careful and take the British by surprise we may succeed in striking them a pretty hard blow and in getting away again without being damaged much ourselves."

"That is my idea, also, and I would like nothing better than to make the attempt."

"Let us do so then."

"You are willing to go into it with your Liberty Boys?"

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, I would be glad to make the attempt, but feel that before doing so I should consult the commander-in-chief and see what he thinks about it."

"Very good; see him at the earliest possible moment."

"I will do so. I will go to-day to the main encamp-

ment and will have a talk with him regarding this matter."

"Shall I go along?"

"No; you stay here and take command of the entire force, yours and mine both."

"Very good; if you wish it."

"It will be best, I judge; there are not likely to be any redcoats between here and headquarters, and I will be safe enough in going alone."

Then they went out to where the soldiers were, and Light Horse Harry got ready and rode away toward the north.

He arrived at the patriot encampment about the middle of the afternoon, and went straight to headquarters to see the commander-in-chief.

CHAPTER X.

PERFECTING THE PLAN.

General Washington and Light Horse Harry had a long talk together.

The commander-in-chief said he was willing that the attempt should be made to capture some of the soldiers and arms and ammunitions in the fort at Paulus Hook.

"You will have to be very careful, however," he said; "you are taking grave risks in making such an attempt."

"True, sir; but by taking the enemy by surprise there won't be such great danger."

"I suppose not. Well, let me hear how you succeed as soon as possible after you have made the attack."

"I will do so."

Light Horse Harry mounted his horse and took his departure as soon as the interview ended. He was eager to get back and perfect the plans for making the attack on the British at Paulus Hook.

It was late in the evening when he got back to the encampment of the Liberty Boys and his own men, so nothing was done that night.

Next day at about half-past ten o'clock, while Dick and Light Horse Harry were talking their plans over, a boy of about ten years came to the camp. He was greatly excited and frightened.

"What is the trouble, my boy?" asked Light Horse Harry, kindly.

"There is a force of British dragoons over in the neighborhood where I live, sir," was the reply; "they are robbing the patriots and threatening to burn their homes."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, sir; and father sent me over here to see if you would come and drive them away."

"We will do our best to do so, my boy," was the reply; "how many of the British are there, do you think?"

"There are about one hundred."

"Very well; you be ready to act as guide. Dick, tell your men to get ready, and I will do the same with mine."

"All right."

There was a bridling and saddling of horses in hot haste, and then the Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry's men mounted and rode away. Light Horse Harry took the boy up in front of him and the little chap told them which way to go.

They were not more than three-quarters of an hour in reaching the boy's home. The British had not been there as yet, and the boy's father, who had been watching the British from the top of a tree, said they were about a mile away toward the north.

Light Horse Harry had lowered the boy to the ground, and now he said:

"Forward, all! We must catch up with the British and put them to flight."

The party of patriots galloped northward.

When they came to the house where they expected to find the enemy, the British were gone. They had taken everything of value that they could lay their hands on; they had been gone only a few minutes, the woman of the house told them.

The patriots rode on up the road, eager to catch up with the British.

They had gone nearly a mile without having seen anything of the enemy, and were wondering what had become of the dragoons.

Dick happened to look back and saw a girl coming after them on horseback, riding as rapidly as she could make the horse go.

"I wonder what she wants," said Dick, having called Light Horse Harry's attention to her.

"I don't know; she evidently wants to overtake us, however."

The patriots slackened the speed of their horses at once.

The girl came riding up alongside Light Horse Harry and Dick Slater, her eyes shining eagerly, her hair streaming.

"The British dragoons have taken the road through the fields," she said. "You will have to ride fast if you head them off."

"Ha! so that is the way of it, eh?" exclaimed Light Horse Harry.

"Yes, sir."

"How far should we go in this direction before turning, and in which direction should we turn?"

"Half a mile farther on, sir, is a crossroad; turn to the left, and you may be able to head the British off. They will enter that road at a point a mile from where you make the turn."

"Thank you. Forward, all, as fast as you can make your horses go."

On dashed the party of patriots, and the girl turned and rode back in the direction from which she had come.

When the patriots had reached the crossroads they

turned to the left and rode at the best speed of their horses.

They were still half a mile away from the point where the lane through the fields and timber joined the main road, however, when the British rode out into sight.

"There they are!" cried Bob Estabrook.

"After them!" cried Light Horse Harry.

The patriots urged their horses to their best speed.

The British saw the patriots and put spurs to their horses.

It was evident that the chase would be a long and exciting one.

On rode the redcoats, and after them went the patriots.

It became evident that the patriots' horses were somewhat better than those of the British, for the former gained on the latter somewhat.

It was slowly, however, and it was evident that it would be a very difficult matter to gain the half mile that lay between.

"Keep at work, men," cried Light Horse Harry; "get all the speed possible out of your horses."

The men nodded to signify that they would do so, and the chase went on.

Slowly but surely the patriots gained.

The British dragoons, noting this fact, took advantage of the first chance they got and turned toward the south.

They wished to get back toward the fort at Paulus Hook, for they realized that they were outnumbered and could not hope to offer successful resistance.

The patriots turned toward the south, also, and rode at the top of their speed.

Slowly they gained.

Closer and closer they drew to the British dragoons.

At last they were almost within musket-shot distance of the British.

"We will soon have a chance to do them some damage," said Light Horse Harry.

The men responded with a cheer.

The British were evidently greatly worried, for they kept looking back over their shoulders and belaboring their horses with whip and spur.

Closer and closer drew the patriots, and at last they were within musket-shot distance of the enemy.

"Ready!" cried Light Horse Harry; "give the redcoats a volley from the muskets."

The men responded with cheers, and cocked and leveled their muskets.

Suddenly Light Horse Harry cried out:

"Fire!"

The men obeyed.

Crash!—roar!

The volley rang out loudly, and several of the British dragoons toppled from their saddles to the ground.

The British returned the fire, but as they were forced to half turn in their saddles, they could not take aim, and their shots did not do much damage.

"Now with the pistols!" cried Light Horse Harry.

The soldiers drew pistols and fired a volley from them. Two or three more dragoons were dropped out of their saddles.

Just then the British reached a point where there was open ground, and the dragoons scattered and rode to the right and to the left.

The patriots scattered also, and rode after the dragoons, firing at them from their pistols, and occasionally they succeeded in dropping one.

The British fired in reply as best they could, but the bullets were fired at random, and so did not inflict much damage, several of the patriots being wounded, but only slightly.

It was not far to the fort on Paulus Hook, and the patriots stopped when they got close enough so that they would be in danger from the guns there.

The British within the fort did fire two or three shots, but not much damage was done.

One horse was crippled by a cannon ball and the rider was thrown and shaken up, but there were other horses not far away, and he managed to catch one and mount and rode along with his comrades, who had turned back.

The patriots paused at a farmhouse near by and called the man out of doors.

"You will find some wounded soldiers up the road a ways," said Light Horse Harry; "hitch up to a wagon and come along with us. We will put the wounded men in the wagon, and then you will haul them to the fort on Paulus Hook."

The man nodded and went to the stable and harnessed up a team, which he hitched to the wagon. He placed a lot of straw in the wagonbed and then drove up the road. Five wounded dragoons were found and were lifted into the wagon by the patriot soldiers.

"Now drive to Paulus Hook with these wounded soldiers," said Light Horse Harry.

"Very well, sir," and the man drove away.

Then the patriots rode back toward their encampment.

It was quite a ride, and it took them a good deal longer to reach it than they had been in coming, for they rode more slowly.

They arrived at the encampment presently, however, and after resting awhile, Dick took a party of Liberty Boys and went to the home of the maiden who had told them about the redcoats taking a short cut through the fields.

The girl's name was Helen Bolton, and she was a patriot maiden. Her mother was a widow, and while the British dragoons had taken some of the things that took their eye, in the way of knickknacks about the house, they had not done much damage.

The homes of two patriot neighbors had been rifled completely, however; and at one of the two the redcoats had even gathered some brush with which to start a fire, it being their intention to burn the house down. The coming of the Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry's men had frightened them away, however.

Dick and his comrades rode back to the encampment, and it was now nearly noon.

After dinner Dick and Light Horse Harry got together again and began talking of their plans for making an attack on the fort at Paulus Hook.

They discussed the matter from every standpoint, and decided upon their plans.

They came to the decision that they would make the attack on the fort that night.

"We will go down there and be ready to make a dash across the levee and up to and into the fort as soon after midnight as possible," said Light Horse Harry.

"That will be the best plan," agreed Dick.

The Liberty Boys and the men in Light Horse Harry's company were eager for the attempt to be made.

The Liberty Boys, especially, could hardly wait for the time to come for them to start.

Night came at last, however, and all the necessary preparations were made.

About ten o'clock the combined forces set out.

They made their way down to the vicinity of the fort.

It was a dark night; just the kind of a night for the work in hand.

A slow and cautious advance was now made, and then the party came to a stop about two hundred yards from the end of the levee which led across the creek cutting off the neck of land known as the Hook.

They knew there was a sentinel stationed at the end of the levee, and in order to keep him from raising an alarm it would be necessary to capture him.

Dick volunteered to do this. He felt that he would be able to do the work alone, but Bob wanted to go along, and so he gave him permission to do so.

"Come along, then, Bob," he said; "we will have to be very careful, or the sentinel will give utterance to an outcry and arouse the fort."

"You can count on me, Dick. I'll do my part, all right."

They started and made their way carefully toward the end of the levee.

They moved as cautiously as possible, and no red Indian of the forest could have made less noise than they made.

Closer and closer to the point they were heading for they drew, and at last they paused and looked and listened intently.

They could not see anyone, but they heard the measured footsteps of the sentinel as he paced back and forth on his beat.

Every time he reached the end farthest away from where the two were they slipped forward a yard or two, and thus gradually got close enough so that it would be possible to leap upon the sentinel almost at a single bound.

"The next time he comes to this end of the beat we will make the attack," whispered Dick; "wait till he has turned to start away and then leap upon his back."

"All right," said Bob, in a cautious whisper.

Presently the sentinel reached the end of his beat, and turned to start back.

Silently the two Liberty Boys rose to their feet; then they leaped upon the sentinel.

CHAPTER XI.

THE ATTACK ON THE FORT.

They could just see the faint outlines of the sentinel, and it was as much by good luck as anything else that Dick succeeded in getting the fellow by the throat.

Bob got him by the arms, and the two men were able to handle the soldier without giving him a chance to make an outcry, though he struggled fiercely to get free and did his best to cry out.

Dick compressed the sentinel's windpipe, and the fellow could only gurgle a little, the noise of which could not have been heard more than a dozen feet or so.

Being unable to get his breath, the sentinel was soon choked into insensibility, and as soon as this had been accomplished Dick and Bob carried him back to where the rest were and tied him hand and foot and gagged him.

"Now, then, we have a clear road ahead of us to the further end of the levee," said Light Horse Harry, cautiously; "let us advance slowly and cautiously, and when we get to the end of the levee we will make the dash into the fort."

This word was sent around and then the party advanced.

Slowly and cautiously it moved forward. The levee was reached and the patriots moved slowly across it.

Dick knew there was a sentinel at the farther end of the levee, but they expected to rush right over him, and even if he succeeded in giving the alarm, they would be into the fort before the British were awake, almost.

They made very fair progress, and presently were almost at the end of the levee. Dick told Light Horse Harry that the time had come to make the dash, and the word was sent along the line and through the party in whispers.

Then suddenly Dick gave the signal to advance; it was a low but shrill whistle, and the instant they heard it the soldiers dashed forward.

They ran at the top of their speed and were upon the sentinel in a jiffy. He fired his musket quickly and at random, and gave utterance to a yell, and then was upset and run over by the flying patriots.

Of course the yell and the report of the musket awoke the soldiers in the fort, and they leaped up quickly, but before they could grab their muskets the patriots were over the entrenchments and inside the fort.

The patriots fired a volley from their muskets and two more from pistols, and then they seized some of the redcoats and dragged them out of the fort and away; they

gathered up a lot of muskets and secured quite a lot of ammunition also.

The patriots got away before the redcoats could get straightened out and in shape to do anything, and hastened across the levee and away in the direction of the encampment.

They paused only long enough to bind the arms of the prisoners and gag them, and then they hastened onward.

An hour later they were back at the encampment.

They found that they had secured twenty-two prisoners, and that they had carried away forty muskets and five hundred rounds of ammunition. This last was something that they were sadly in need of, and it came in very handy.

All hands felt very much elated over the achievement.

It had been accomplished without any loss of life on the side of the patriots.

Several were wounded, but the wounds were slight ones, such as the hardy veterans thought nothing of at all.

They talked of the affair and congratulated one another on their success.

"What is to be done with the prisoners?" asked Dick next morning, after all hands had breakfasted.

"I think they should be taken to the main encampment over at White Plains," said Light Horse Harry.

"I judge that would be the best," agreed Dick.

"Will you take them there, Dick?"

"I can do so if you wish me to."

"Very well, you attend to that, then."

Dick selected nineteen of the Liberty Boys, and they saddled their own horses and enough more to accommodate the twenty-two prisoners.

This done, the prisoners were placed in the saddles, the Liberty Boys mounted and the party set out.

They crossed the Hudson at Dobbs' Ferry and then rode onward toward White Plains.

They arrived there about four o'clock in the afternoon, and having placed the prisoners in the charge of the officer in command at the main patriot encampment, and leaving the Liberty Boys there, Dick rode to headquarters to report to General Washington.

Dick was quite a favorite with the commander-in-chief, and he gave the youth a warm greeting.

"I am glad to see you, Dick," he said; "you have news for me?"

"Yes, your excellency; we made the attack on the fort at Paulus Hook last night and succeeded in killing and wounding a number and in capturing twenty-two prisoners and bringing them away with us."

"That is indeed good news. Where are the prisoners?"

"Myself and nineteen comrades brought them over here this afternoon."

"Ah, they are over at the main camp?"

"Yes, your excellency."

"That is good."

"We secured, also, in addition to the prisoners, a number of muskets and about five hundred rounds of ammunition."

"That was good, also."

"Yes, sir."

Then Dick told the story of the attack on the fort at Paulus Hook in detail.

The commander-in-chief listened with interest, and when Dick was through he said that the attack had been well conceived and well executed.

After some further conversation Dick bade General Washington goodby and went back to the main encampment.

"What are you going to do now, Dick?" asked Bob.

"I guess we may as well start on our trip back to the place where we left Light Horse Harry and his men, and our comrades, Bob."

"All right; say, let's go by way of our homes and stop and take supper with the folks, old man."

"All right; that is just what I was going to suggest myself, Bob."

The youths were soon ready, and, mounting their horses, rode away in the direction of Tarrytown, their homes being near that place.

The company of Liberty Boys had been made up near Tarrytown from among Dick Slater's neighbor boys, and all the youths were figuring on eating supper with their folks at their own homes.

It was about six miles from White Plains to where Dick and Bob lived. Their homes were within a quarter of a mile of each other, and all the nineteen youths lived within a radius of a mile and a half of where Dick and Bob lived.

The youths were just about an hour in reaching the Slater and Estabrook homes, and here they split up and scattered, the nineteen youths promising to be back within two hours' time.

Dick and Bob were given a joyous reception at their homes. Dick's mother was a widow, and he had a sister, Edith. She was Bob Estabrook's sweetheart; and Bob's sister, Alice, was Dick's sweetheart.

When the members of the two families learned that the youths were to be there only a couple of hours, it was decided to have supper together at the Estabrook home. This would be better than to be separated.

So the women folks bustled around in the kitchen and got a splendid supper, while Dick, Bob and Mr. Estabrook sat in the sitting-room and talked.

When supper was ready all sat up to the table and ate and talked and laughed and enjoyed themselves hugely.

At last the meal was ended, and then, leaving the dishes standing, all went into the sitting-room and talked awhile.

Then Dick and Alice and Bob and Edith went out of doors and walked slowly about the yard talking to each other about—well, about things that interested them, but which it is unnecessary to speak of here.

The time passed all too swiftly for the young folks, and it was time for Dick and Bob to begin to think of going almost before they knew it.

Then the other youths began to arrive, and before another half hour had passed all were on hand.

Then Dick and Bob bade their folks goodby and all mounted and rode away.

"Are we going by way of Dobbs' Ferry, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Yes, I think it will be best to go that way, Bob."

So they headed toward Dobbs' Ferry.

They reached the river at last, and had to wait for the ferryboat to come across.

When it did come, they led their horses aboard and were taken across.

When they reached the shore they led the horses off the boat, settled with the boatman, and mounting, rode away.

They had quite a long ride ahead of them, and it was so dark they could hardly see the road.

Their horses could see, however, and easily kept in the road.

On the youths rode, and at last they arrived at the point where they had left White Horse Harry and the Liberty Boys, only to find them missing—all save twenty-two of the Liberty Boys, who owned the twenty-two horses that the youths had taken with them, and on which the prisoners had ridden.

From these youths Dick learned that the rest of the force had gone away just before sundown in chase of a party of dragoons, and had not yet returned.

"Which way did they go?" asked Dick.

"Toward the north."

"It is strange that we did not meet them."

"I don't know; they had plenty of time to go quite a ways north and then turn to the right or to the left."

"Yes; likely they got out of our way before we came along."

Knowing of nothing else to do, Dick gave the order for the youths to unbridle and unsaddle their horses and go into camp.

This they did, and it was an hour or more before the other Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men got back to the encampment.

"So you are back, eh?" exclaimed Light Horse Harry, when he saw Dick and the other youths.

"Yes; we have been back an hour or more."

"You got the prisoners to the main encampment without losing any of them?"

"Yes."

"You saw the commander-in-chief?"

"Yes, I went and reported to him."

"What did he say?"

"He was well pleased, and said that we had done splendidly."

"I was sure he would be pleased."

Then Dick asked Light Horse Harry where he and the soldiers had been.

"We chased a party of dragoons about ten miles," was the reply.

"Did you do them any damage?"

"Yes, we killed a number and wounded a dozen at least."

"That is good."

"Yes, I feel very well satisfied."

"I should judge that you would feel that way."

CHAPTER XII.

THE BRITISH ARE WORKED UP.

As may well be supposed, the daring feat of attacking the British garrison and capturing some of the soldiers, after killing and wounding others, by the patriot force, occasioned great excitement and indignation among the British, both in the fort and over in the city of New York.

The escape of Dick Slater and his comrade and all the other patriot prisoners from out the old sugar house had made General Clinton very angry, and when the news of the attack on the fort was carried to him he became very angry and excited.

He leaped to his feet and paced the floor.

"That is the work of those Liberty Boys, I know," he said; "it is just the kind of work they delight in."

"Quite likely," agreed Cornwallis, who was with him; "there is nothing too daring for Dick Slater to attempt."

"You are right about that, I guess."

"No doubt about that, but the Liberty Boys must have had help. The commander of the fort says there must have been three hundred of the rebels."

"Oh, I suppose there must have been more than just the Liberty Boys."

The commander-in-chief paced the floor awhile longer, and then said:

"General Cornwallis, something must be done."

"I think so myself."

"Have you anything to suggest?"

"No, save that in my opinion it would be a good plan to send a couple of our most expert scouts and spies over across the river and have them hunt out the hiding-place of the rebels."

"You think they have a hiding-place over there?"

"Yes, an encampment or rendezvous of some kind, from which place they slip out and do their work."

"I will act upon your suggestion at once. Orderly!"

The orderly quickly appeared.

"Tell Sharp and Longstreet to come to headquarters at once," he ordered.

The orderly bowed and withdrew.

Half an hour later two men dressed in citizen's clothing entered.

They were two of the best scouts and spies in the British army. They were Tories who had joined the British army and they knew the country all around New York, which made them much more valuable scouts and spies

than would have been the case had they been British soldiers.

"You sent for us, sir?" asked one.

"Yes, Longstreet; I have some work for both of you."

"What is the work, sir?" from Sharp.

"I want that you shall go over across the river and look for that party of rebels that made the attack on the fort over on the Hook last night."

The men bowed, and Longstreet said:

"Very well, sir; I am ready to start at once."

"And so am I," from Sharp.

"Then away with you, and don't come back till you have discovered where those rebels have their headquarters."

"Very well, sir," in unison.

Then the two saluted and took their departure.

"Those fellows will find out what I want to know, if any men can," General Clinton remarked when they had gone.

"Yes," was the reply; "they are good men in their line of work."

This took place about noon of the day after the fort was attacked.

The two scouts crossed the river and began their work. It did not take them more than half the afternoon to find the patriot encampment, and they put in a couple of hours spying on it and learning how many men were there.

When they had learned all they could, they made their way back to the fort on Paulus Hook and crossed to the city in the boat they had come across in.

They went at once to headquarters and found General Clinton there.

"Well, what success?" he asked.

"Good success," was the reply.

"Then you learned where the rebels have their headquarters?"

"We did."

"Good; how far is it from the fort over on Paulus Hook?"

"Only about two miles."

"That isn't very far."

"No; the worst part of the trip is getting across the river."

"So it is; well, it won't be necessary to take many men from here."

"I should judge not; there are about three hundred of the rebels, and the force over at the Hook ought to be able to handle them."

"Yes, but I will send over one hundred men."

"You will want us to go along and act as guides?"

"Yes."

"Very well; how soon will you send the men?"

"Right away. I want that the rebels shall be struck a blow as soon as possible."

"Very good; we will be in readiness to accompany them."

The soldiers were ready within the hour and went

across the river on a ferryboat, the two scouts accompanying them to act as guides.

They went to the fort on Paulus Hook and reported to the commander, and he ordered three hundred of his soldiers to get ready to go and make an attack on the rebels. This made a force of four hundred, which, it was thought, would be sufficient to capture the rebel force or scatter it to the four winds.

It was decided, after some consideration, that it would be a good plan to wait till after midnight, as then they would be more likely to be enabled to make a success of their plan.

So they waited till after midnight and then set out.

They arrived in the vicinity of the camp three-quarters of an hour later, and the two scouts stole forward to reconnoiter.

They were treated to a surprise, indeed.

No rebels were to be seen. They had disappeared.

The scouts rubbed their eyes and looked again, by the light of the moon, which was now up a little ways, enabling them to see very well.

They could not understand it; they had judged from the look of things that afternoon that the camp was a more or less permanent one, but now the enemy was missing.

They were greatly disappointed, for they had hoped that the rebels would be found there.

They made a tour of the vicinity and looked for the patriot force, but could not find any traces of it.

They went back and reported the affair to the commander of the British force.

"What! they are gone, you say?" the commander cried.

"Yes."

"Where have they gone?"

"That is more than we can say, sir."

"Well, that is too bad. That is a disappointment, indeed."

"So it is."

"They may be near at hand," said the officer; "did you look around for them?"

"Yes; they are not anywhere around in the vicinity."

"Well, that makes our plans a complete failure."

"There is a house right close to where the encampment was," said one of the scouts; "I think the people who live there are rebels, and it is possible that they know where the party of rebels has gone."

"We will soon find out," grimly; "lead the way to the house."

The scouts went in the lead and soon the British had surrounded the house.

The officer then advanced and knocked on the door.

Of course, the folks were in bed and asleep, and the officer had to knock again.

Presently footsteps were heard, and then the door was opened and Mr. Benton appeared.

"What is wanted?" he asked. He was somewhat alarmed, for there was light enough so that he could see there was a large force of British soldiers.

"I wish to ask you a few questions," was the reply; "and I want that you shall answer them promptly and truthfully."

"I will do so, sir."

"Very well; there was a rebel force encamped not far from your house this afternoon, but it is not there now. Where did it go?"

Mr. Benton shook his head.

"I don't know, sir," he said.

"You are sure?" in a stern voice; "you are not lying to me?"

"No, indeed, sir. I did not know they had gone until you told me just now. They were there when I went to bed."

"You are a rebel, and I think you are trying to deceive me!" sternly.

"I assure you that such is not the case, sir."

"Very well, then; go back and go to bed."

"Thank you."

Mr. Benton closed the door and barred it and went back to bed, and the commander of the British force, after some discussion with two or three of the under officers, decided to go into camp on the site of the late patriot encampment.

When this had been done and the sentinels had been posted, he called the two scouts to him and told them to go and make a thorough search and try to find out where the patriots had gone.

The scouts set out at once and began making a thorough search for the patriots.

They had been at this about half an hour when they heard the sound of firing in the direction of the fort at Paulus Hook.

"What can that mean?" remarked one, as they stood listening.

"I don't know," replied the other; "unless it should prove to be that while we have been looking for the rebels up here they have slipped around and made another attack on the fort at the Hook."

"Jove, I half believe that is what they have done!"

"Let us hasten back to camp and inform the commander of our suspicions."

"All right."

They made their way back to the camp and found that the soldiers were up and getting ready to march. The sound of the firing had been heard by the sentinels, and they had aroused the camp.

As soon as the soldiers were ready to march they set out, and three-quarters of an hour later were at the fort.

There they met with a surprise that was not pleasing. They found eight or ten dead soldiers, several wounded ones, and all the cannon that had been in the fort had been thrown into the river—this they learned from a wounded soldier who was able to talk.

The rest of the garrison, so the soldier said, had been carried away prisoners.

"And this was done by those very rebels that we went

up into the country to try to kill or capture!" exclaimed the commander, bitterly. "They certainly turned the tables on us completely."

"But we must get even with them," said another officer; "we must not let them have the better of us in this fashion."

"You are right."

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SECOND ATTACK.

The Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men had indeed turned the tables on the British.

About halfway between the fort on Paulus Hook and the place where the patriots had been encamped a patriot by the name of Hilton lived. He had a couple of dogs, and away along in the night he was awakened by the barking of them.

He got up and slipped out of the house and made the discovery that a strong force of soldiers was passing his house. By listening to the talk of the men as they marched along, he was enabled to learn that an attack was to be made on the rebel force encamped near the Benton home.

As he was a strong patriot, Mr. Hilton at once decided that he would warn the patriots and enable them to make their escape from the threatened danger.

He hastened away, and was soon ahead of the British.

He reached the patriot encampment while yet the British force was half a mile away, and he explained the situation to the sentinel, who aroused the camp at once.

There was a saddling of horses in hot haste, and then the patriots mounted and rode away, up the road. Dick and Light Horse Harry were riding together at the head of the force, and Dick said:

"This force must have come from the fort at Paulus Hook, don't you think?"

"Quite likely, Dick," was the reply.

"Then what is to hinder us from going there and finishing the work we begun last night?"

Light Horse Harry uttered an exclamation.

"There is nothing to hinder," he said; "it is just the thing to do."

"That is what I think."

They sent the word around among the men, who were delighted.

It was just the thing they would prefer to do.

The horses were urged into a gallop, and the party rode northward till it came to a crossroad; then it turned toward the west and went in this direction a mile, after which it turned south toward Paulus Hook.

A ride of three-quarters of an hour and they were at their destination.

They dismounted and tied their horses.

Then they stole forward till they were to the end of the levee, and just as the sentinel discovered them, they made a dash forward, upsetting the sentinel, and running across the levee with all their might.

At the farther end another sentinel had been stationed, but he heard the yells to which the first one gave utterance and took the alarm and fled into the fort.

He did not get there much ahead of the Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men, however; and there was an exchange of shots, the majority being fired by the patriots, however, as there were only about sixty men in the fort.

Eight or ten of these were killed and six or eight were wounded. The rest, forty-two in number, were taken prisoners.

"Let's throw the cannon into the river," suggested Bob, and the others were right in for it.

"Yes, yes!" was the cry; "let's do that."

"We will have to hurry, then," said Dick; "for the British will send some soldiers across from the city and make an attack on us if we linger here long."

This was good advice, and the patriots followed it. They lost no time, but went to work with a will and threw the guns into the river, after which they hastened away, taking the prisoners with them.

When the point where the horses had been left was reached the prisoners were placed on the backs of forty-two of the strongest horses, whose owners then mounted behind. The other patriots mounted, also, and then the party rode away.

It went back the same road it had come, and, feeling that it would not do to return to the place where they had been encamped before, it was decided to go into camp near the home of Helen Bolton, the girl who had given them information regarding which way the force of British dragoons had gone, as told in a former chapter.

There was heavy timber all around, and the patriots entered the timber at a point back of the widow Bolton's house, and went into camp.

Next morning Light Horse Harry said he would take an equal number of his men and conduct the prisoners to the main encampment at White Plains.

"Do you wish to go?" asked Dick; "because, if you do not, I can go."

"Yes, I wish to see the commander-in-chief," was the reply.

"Very well, then."

So Light Horse Harry and forty-two of his men rode away, taking the prisoners with them.

They arrived at White Plains about two o'clock, and as soon as he had turned the prisoners over into the charge of the commander at the main encampment, Light Horse Harry rode to headquarters to report to the commander-in-chief.

He was given a cordial greeting by General Washington, for he was a favorite with the commander-in-chief.

"How have you been getting along with your work over in New Jersey?" asked the general.

"Fine, sir," was the reply; "we made another attack on the fort at Paulus Hook last night, and finished up the work we had already begun."

"Indeed? What did you do?"

"We captured forty-two prisoners; I have brought them with me."

"Ah, indeed? That is good."

"Yes, and we threw the cannon into the Hudson River."

"That was well done, indeed."

Then Light Horse Harry told the story in detail of how all this had been accomplished.

The general listened with interest, and when he had heard all, complimented the young patriot officer on the good work he and his men and Dick Slater and his men had done.

"You have made it extremely lively for the British dragoons over in New Jersey," he said.

"We have done the best we could," was the modest reply.

"You have done splendidly. And all I can say is, that if you wish to keep on at the work I shall be glad to have you do so."

"It will give me great credit to do so, your excellency. And Captain Slater and his men will be delighted, also, I am sure."

"I have no doubt regarding that; they like any kind of work that is lively and exciting."

"So they do."

The commander-in-chief and Light Horse Harry conversed an hour longer, and then the young officer bade the general goodby and took his departure.

He mounted his horse and rode back to the main encampment.

His men had put in the time conversing with the soldiers in the camp and telling them what lively times they had been having, and were now ready to start back.

"Mount and come along," said their commander.

The men obeyed, and the party rode away in the direction of Dobbs' Ferry.

They arrived there just before dark and crossed on the ferryboat; it was necessary for the boat to make two trips in order to carry them across.

They paid the ferryman and then mounted and rode away toward the southwest.

It was soon dark, but their horses would have kept in the road even without being guided, so there was no trouble about getting along all right.

They arrived at the encampment about midnight and found all quiet there.

They were soon lying down, sound asleep, and felt as fresh next morning, almost, as though they had not lost half a night's sleep.

Dick was eager to hear what General Washington had said.

"He was greatly pleased," said Light Horse Harry; "he complimented us greatly on our good work."

"I am glad of that."

"Oh, he is well pleased."

"Does he want that we shall remain over here?"

"Yes; he said for us to stay and keep chasing the British

dragoons till they are glad to go over to New York and stay there and stop robbing and pillaging the homes of the patriots."

"I'm glad of that."

"So am I," from Bob.

The other soldiers who were within hearing distance said the same. It was plain that they enjoyed the work they had been doing.

Dick and Light Horse Harry began talking of their plans at once. They wished to decide what it would be best for them to do.

They came to the conclusion, finally, that it would be best to simply let themselves be governed by circumstances.

"We might divide up into three parties of one hundred men to each," suggested Dick; "and then each party could go in a different direction and look for marauding parties of British."

"I think that will be a good plan," agreed Light Horse Harry.

So this was done and the three parties set out.

Of course, Dick and his Liberty Boys remained together, and Light Horse Harry divided his party up into two, placing his second officer in charge of one of the parties.

Dick and his Liberty Boys were the lucky ones this time.

About the middle of the forenoon they rounded a bend in the road and came in sight of a party of British who were engaged in pillaging the house of a patriot.

"Charge, Liberty Boys!" cried Dick.

The youths obeyed.

They urged their horses forward at a gallop and dashed onward, with muskets held in readiness for instant use.

The British saw them coming, however, and, leaping into their saddles, dashed away down the road.

They got away before the Liberty Boys were within musket-shot distance, so it would be necessary to gain on them before any damage could be inflicted.

On dashed the redcoats, and after them went the Liberty Boys.

The British had good horses, and the youths found that they could not gain on the fugitives much, if any.

"It will be a long chase," said Bob.

"Yes, it looks that way," agreed Dick; "and I am only afraid that we will not be able to overtake them at all."

"I hope that we will be able to do so; let's get all the speed out of our horses that we possibly can."

"Very well."

The youths used their spurs and made as good speed as possible, but if they gained any at all it was only slightly.

Presently they rounded a bend in the road, and an exclamation of surprise escaped the lips of all.

The British dragoons had come to a stop, and all around them, to the number of three hundred, at least, were British soldiers—infantry, who had no doubt come from the fort on Paulus Hook to look for the rebels who had been doing such great work in that vicinity.

"Halt!" cried Dick, and then, as the youths obeyed, he went on:

"Back, quickly! The enemy is too strong for us!"

CHAPTER XIV.

MORE GOOD WORK.

The youths put spurs to their horses and rode away, back up the road.

They did not go far, for they knew the infantry could not pursue them, and they did not think that the dragoons would dare do so.

They paused a quarter of a mile away and looked at the enemy.

It was evident that the British did not know just what to do.

They were holding a council, and there was much gesticulating.

"I wish Light Horse Harry and his men would put in an appearance right now," said Bob; "we would charge the redcoats and scatter them like chaff."

"I wish so, too, Bob," agreed Dick.

"There they come now!" cried Mark Morrison, pointing up the road.

Sure enough, a party of horsemen was coming around the bend a quarter of a mile distant.

A glance only was needed to tell the Liberty Boys that the newcomers were Light Horse Harry and his men.

The Liberty Boys set up a yell.

"Come on!" cried Bob, excitedly; "come on, and we will charge the redcoats yonder and make them get out of this in a hurry!"

Light Horse Harry and his men responded with cheers and urged their horses forward at the top of their speed.

They were soon alongside the Liberty Boys, and then the combined forces dashed onward toward the enemy.

The British seemed at a loss to know what to do.

For a few moments they stood irresolute, and then the infantry scattered and entered the timber at both sides of the road, while the dragoons whirled their horses and dashed down the road.

The Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men dashed onward, firing at the infantry as they rode past where the soldiers had taken refuge.

The British had good horses, however, and it was impossible for the patriots to gain on them.

The Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry and his men chased the dragoons to within a quarter of a mile of the fort on Paulus Hook, and then paused and turned back.

They rode back, but did not return by way of the same road they had traveled in coming. They feared they might be ambushed by the British infantry.

They turned to the left at a crossroad and went a mile in that direction, and then again turned toward the north.

When they were about even with the point where they had seen the British infantry, they paused and dismounted.

"Now, you stay here," said Light Horse Harry; "Dick and I are going to reconnoiter and see if we can learn where the British are."

The two then took their departure.

They entered the timber afoot and made their way toward the east.

Fifteen minutes later they were at the other road, and here they looked all around. Not seeing anything of the enemy, they moved toward the north, keeping a sharp lookout ahead.

On rounding a bend in the road half a mile distant they caught sight of the British infantry.

It was half a mile away, marching northward.

While the two were watching, however, the British came to a stop and turned aside and entered the timber.

Dick and Light Horse Harry were interested, of course, and they moved in that direction at a rapid walk.

"Looks as though they are going to go into camp, Dick," said Light Horse Harry.

"Yes, and I hope that such is the case."

They were not long in arriving near the point where the redcoats had entered the timber, and sure enough, the British had gone into camp.

"We will play a little trick on them," said Light Horse Harry.

"So we will," agreed Dick; "at least, we will try."

They hastened away.

They headed diagonally through the timber, and were not more than half an hour in arriving at the point where they had left their comrades.

When they told the men what they had seen all were delighted.

"Let us go and attack them at once," said Bob Estabrook, eagerly.

The others all said the same.

"That is just what we are going to do," said Dick; "get ready, everybody."

Light Horse Harry told his men to get ready, also.

The soldiers tied their horses to trees a couple of hundred yards from the road and then the party set out.

They made their way diagonally through the timber, and at last arrived in the vicinity of the British encampment.

The British had sentinels out, but the majority were stationed along the road to the north and to the south, as it was expected that the patriots would come along the road. There were a couple of sentinels in the woods to the west of the encampment, but they were not paying much attention to their surroundings. Like the rest, they supposed that the enemy, if it came at all, would come along the road.

Closer and closer crept the Liberty Boys and Light Horse Harry's men.

They were within twenty yards of the sentinel before he saw them, and then they made a dash forward and were upon him before he could fire.

He gave utterance to a single wild cry of alarm, and

this was sufficient to cause the British soldiers to leap up and seize their muskets, but before they could fire the patriots gave them a withering volley, which dropped at least seventy-five, dead and wounded.

Then they drew their pistols, and, taking refuge behind trees, fired two more volleys.

The British fired volleys from their muskets and pistols, but they fired at random and did not do any damage to speak of. Besides, the patriots were sheltered behind trees, and could not have been damaged much even had the redcoats taken aim.

It was evident that the British were almost demoralized, and, seeing this, Light Horse Harry gave the command to fire a couple of more pistol volleys.

This was done, and then came the order to charge the redcoats.

This was the order that the patriots had been wanting to hear.

They dashed forward, uttering shouts and yells that had the effect of adding to the demoralization of the redcoats.

They broke and fled at the top of their speed.

After them went the patriots, and they succeeded in knocking a number down with the butts of their muskets.

The British scattered, however, and it was useless to follow them after that, so the order was given for the patriots to cease pursuit, and they did so, making their way back to the scene of the late engagement.

Dead and dying soldiers were lying all around, and the patriots felt sorry for the wounded, and would have liked to have ministered to them, but they did not dare do so, for fear the British would return and fire upon them.

"The redcoats will soon be back, and will look after their dead, and wounded," said Bob; "we don't need to worry."

Dick and Light Horse Harry knew that this was the case, and so gave the order for the patriots to keep right on going.

"We will go back to where we left our horses," said Dick.

A number of the patriots had been wounded, but none so seriously as to make it impossible for them to walk, so the entire party made its way along, and three-quarters of an hour later was at its destination.

All felt that they had done some good work.

But they were not satisfied to quit for the day. They wished to keep on as long as they could see anything.

They did so, too.

When it was getting along toward evening they went back to the point where they had made their encampment and found the other party of patriots there.

This party had had a running fight with a party of British dragoons, so taken all in all, the combined forces had done a good day's work.

All was quiet that evening and night. They were deep enough in the timber so that there was no danger that

their encampment would be seen from the road, and they felt safe.

Next day they divided up into three parties, as had been the case the day before.

They put in the day, and while they saw a couple of forces and gave chase to them, they did not get close enough to do any damage.

The British were now beginning to be greatly worked up.

General Clinton, over at headquarters in the city, fumed and threatened, and at last, in desperation, ordered that a regiment be sent over to hunt the rebels down and drive them out of the country, or kill them.

The regiment was ferried over the river and then it started inland.

Dick and Light Horse Harry held a council and talked the matter over.

They decided that they had done so well and had lost so few of their men that it would be a good plan to go back across the river for awhile.

So they mounted their horses and rode away toward the north.

They arrived at Dobbs' Ferry safely and crossed on the ferryboat.

Then they rode onward toward White Plains, which place they reached by the middle of the afternoon.

Dick and Light Horse Harry went to headquarters together to report.

General Washington gave them a cordial greeting, and asked them how they were getting along.

"We did very well, your excellency," said Light Horse Harry; "but the enemy got too strong for us, and we decided to come back over here for awhile."

Then he explained the matter, and General Washington said they had done right.

"You have done a lot of good work over there," he said; "and I am rather glad that you have come back, for there is some work to be done on this side of the river."

"You may count upon us to do it, sir," said Light Horse Harry.

"Yes, indeed!" from Dick.

THE END.

The next number (165) of "The Liberty Boys of '76" will contain "THE LIBERTY BOYS IN CAMP; OR, WORKING FOR WASHINGTON," by Harry Moore.

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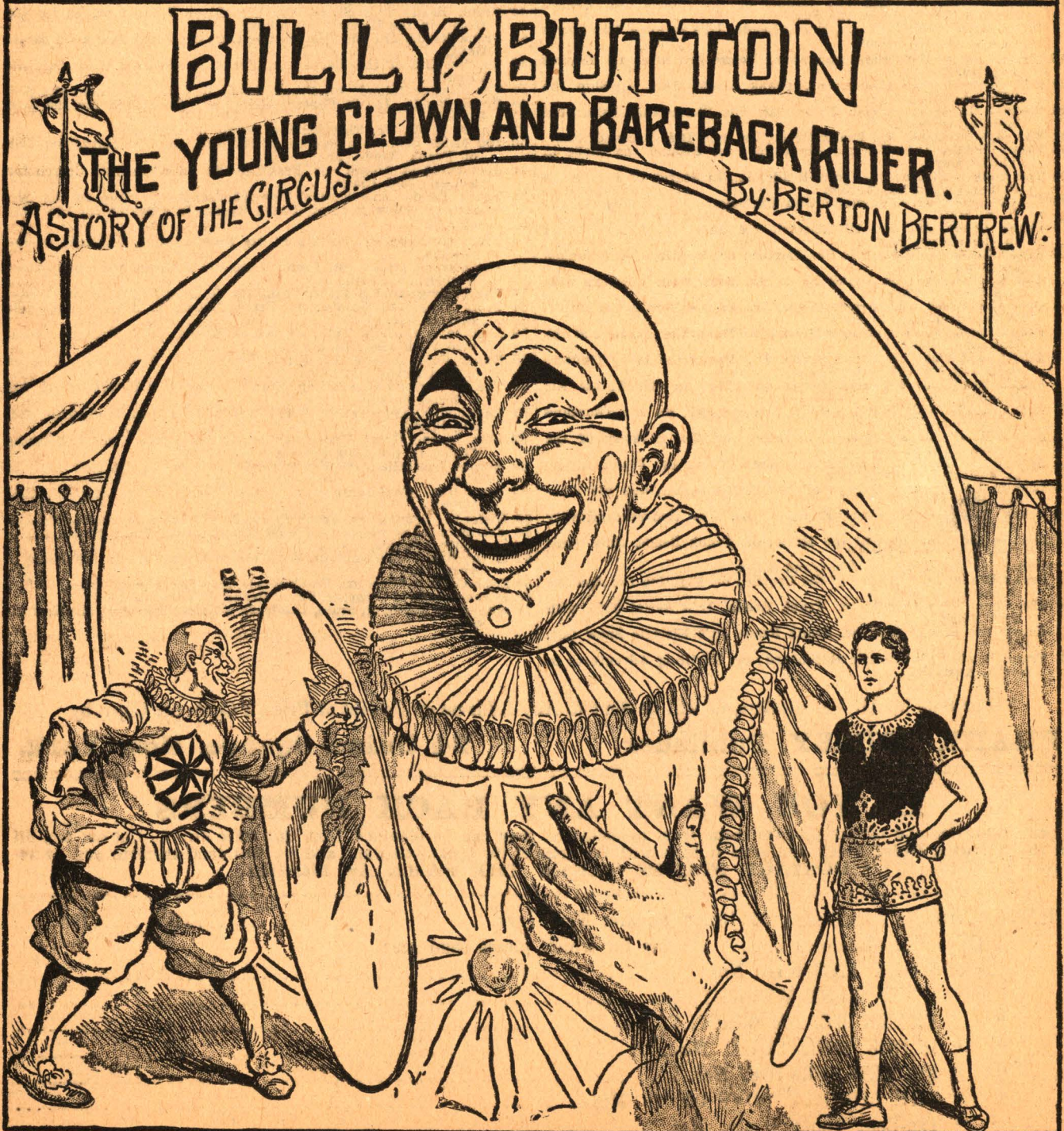
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